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Population and Quality of Life

By

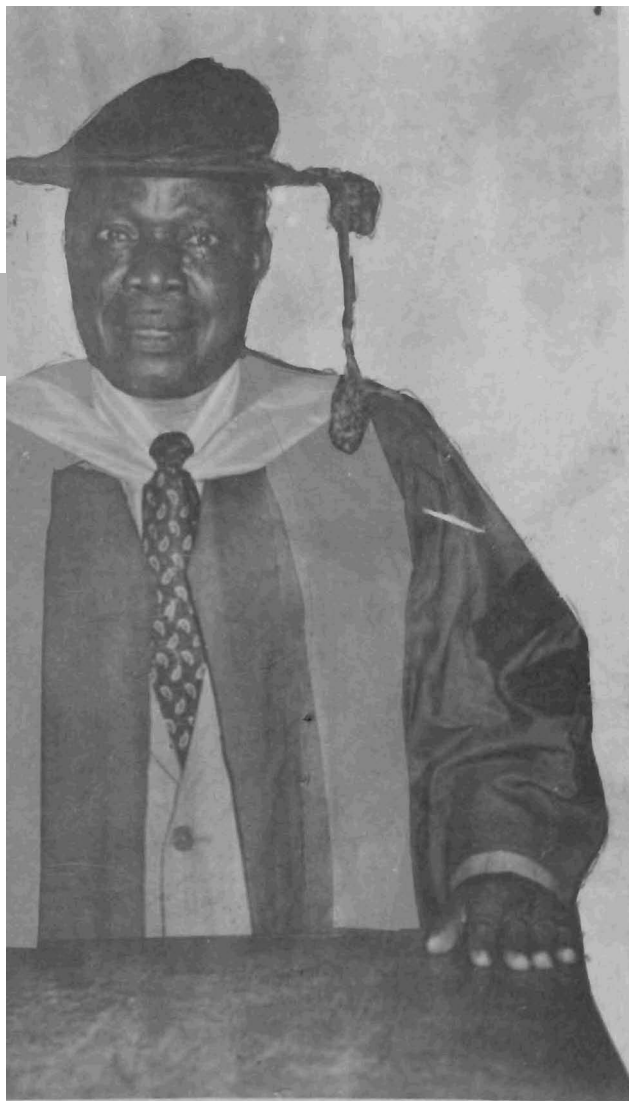
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INTRODUCTION

Drawing on the experience of the developed countries, many developing countries embarked on various development programmes in the post war era in order to improve the quality of life of their people. With the passing of the 1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Act, the British territories started to draw up long-term development plans. Similarly the Monnet plan prepared in France in 1946 was later extended to the French overseas territories. About the same time, long term economic programmes were prepared for the Portuguese territories under the immediate impetus of the requirements of the United States Marshall Plan aid. *In an attempt to 'catch up' with the developed countries, the developing countries came to the conclusion that their development programmes would have to be implemented at a faster rate. Hence, there had been series of development plans aimed at achieving the objective of improving the standard of living of the masses in these societies.*

It is perhaps pertinent at this point to highlight the two perspectives of development. Traditionally, development is viewed narrowly from an economic perspective as a process aimed at raising the levels of production and consumption through capital formation. For instance, classical and neo-classical economics are concerned primarily with the efficient, least-cost allocation of scarce productive resources and with the optimal growth of the resources over time so as to produce an ever expanding range of goods and services (Simon Kuznetts, 1966). Therefore, it was a tendency in the 1950s and 1960s among scholars, government officials, including planners, to use the Gross National Product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or some measurement of income per capita as an index of development. It became evident in the 1970s, even to economists, that the use of GNP or GDP as an index of development is very misleading especially as none of them could provide an adequate measure of the quality of life of the people.

Recognizing the shortcomings of the perspective of the classical economics, Todaro (1977), for instance, stressed that development should be perceived as a multidimensional process involving the reorganization and re-orientation of entire economic and social system. In addition to facilitating improvements in income and output, development should also involve radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as attitudes, customs and beliefs. Dudley Seers (1969) stated further that the multidimensionality of development should be redefined in terms of the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context

of a growing economy. The question to ask about a country's development is, therefore, *'what has been happening to poverty, unemployment, and inequality?'* If all these social indicators of development have declined from high levels, there has been *real* development in the country concerned. If the levels of one or two of these indicators have increased, and especially if levels of all three have increased, it would be unrealistic to call the result 'development' even if the country's per capita income has doubled. In other words, *development must be conceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty. Development is thus a move from a condition of life widely perceived as 'unsatisfactory' to a condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually 'better'. Expectedly, development must be able to afford a great majority of the population access to education, clean water, good health, good nutrition, pollution free environment all of which are perceived as qualitative measures of good quality life.*

It should be noted that a change could be either positive, zero or negative depending on the efficiency in handling the mechanism of change which might be economic, social, political or all. If the mechanisms of change are effectively implemented and a large segment of the population perceive that they are relieved of malnutrition, diseases, illiteracy, slums, unemployment, and inequality, then there is development in the new perspective of development. On this note, Hauser (1979) pointed out that development necessarily involves all aspects of the population and it is a process aimed at improving the status and welfare of a country's nationals.

Modest growth in the GDP of industrial countries usually translate to modest growth in their per capita income. For most developing countries, the rate of growth of the population far exceeds the rate of growth of GDP and as long as the growth of the population exceeds the growth of the GDP, an increase in GDP will not translate into an improvement in the welfare of the people.

The governments of the developing countries cannot, therefore, ignore to take into consideration the effects of population growth rates on the economic performance especially with regards to the average incomes of their people. Lower GDP growth makes it more difficult for countries to finance programmes in education, health, food, housing, among others. Therefore, short-run difficulties have long-run consequences.

These riders point to the links between population growth and economic development. Understanding these links requires much more than the mere counting of heads. It requires consideration of education,

health, employment, incomes, culture and personal beliefs- aspects of everyday life.

Links Between Population and Development: Ideas and Debate

Few topics in economics and demography have a longer tradition of controversy than the analysis of the effect of population on economic growth and development. The debate came to prominence in 1798 with the publication of *An Essay On the Principle of Population*, the famous pamphlet in which Rev. Thomas Malthus argued that food production could not keep pace with population growth. In the absence of prudential checks, Malthus argued, the result would be starvation, vice, and misery, and a tendency for economies to stagnate at a subsistence level of income. In one of the most famous passages in all of economics, Malthus concluded:

"Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio. A slight acquaintance with numbers will show the immensity of the first power in comparison of the second"

It can be argued in view of the prevailing socio-economic circumstances in these countries that the Malthusian perspective of population persists till today in many developing countries despite the fact that his predictions failed to materialize for the countries that he studied. After Malthus prophetic statements, agricultural productivity rose steadily and population growth slowed down in the industrially developed countries that entered the process of Modern Economic Growth. Food surpluses, not food shortages, turned out to be agriculture's nemesis overtime. The 'Malthus Devil' of recurrent famines resulting from the unyielding influence of diminishing returns was exercised by an expansion of the land frontier, capital intensification of agriculture, and improvements in farming technology. In the industrialized countries, concern about the adverse consequences of rapid population growth subsided under the weight of these trends.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the pendulum of opinion swinging decisively back to an emphasis on the negative supply-side impact of population. This reorientation was spurred by several developments in the developing countries: the unprecedented rates of population growth; the awareness that a deficiency of aggregate demand was not important in accounting for development trends in the developing

countries and the promotion and implementation of birth control policies and programmes by governmental agencies. In the 1970s there was also a substantial broadening and strengthening of the intellectual foundations of the pessimistic evaluation of the effects of population growth on development.

A pioneering work in this respect was by Coale and Hoover (1958) in *Population Growth and Economic Development in Low Income Countries* which identified three adverse effects of population growth on development and quality of life:

- (a) **Capital-Shallowing Effect-** Rapid population growth lowers the ratio of capital to labour because there is nothing about population growth per se that increases the rate of savings.
- (b) **Age-Dependency Effect-** Rapid population growth results in high "youth dependency" which increases requirements for household consumption at the expense of savings, and lowers the savings rate.
- (c) **Investment-Diversion Effect-** Rapid population growth shifts government spending into areas such as health and education at the expense of more productive growth-oriented investments.

This hypothesis had a strong impact on the analysis of economic-demographic relationships and even on the U.S. population policy. Indeed, political scientists and policy analyst Phyllis T. Piotrow (1973) observed that the Coale-Hoover thesis "...eventually provided the justification for birth control as a part of U.S. foreign policy". Many of the early simulation models relied upon the Coale-Hoover ideas as the primary linkages between population growth and the economy.

These ideas reinforced the judgements of Robert S. McNamara, the President of the World Bank, in 1973, who compared population growth with nuclear war. He noted that:

...the greatest single obstacle to the economic and social advancement of the majority of peoples in the underdeveloped world is rampant population growth... The threat of unmanageable population pressures is much like the threat of nuclear war... Both threats can and will have catastrophic consequences unless they are dealt with rapidly and rationally.

McNamara's view is shared by many political leaders and a good number of scholars. The National Academy of Sciences' report in 1971 titled *Rapid Population Growth: Consequences and Policy Implications* found little good in population growth in the less developed countries. The National Academy of Sciences' Reports of 1986 titled *Population Growth and Economic Development: Policy Questions* revised its earlier interpretation of the linkage between population and development. It recognised: (1) that population growth and size can have positive as well as negative effects; (2) that there are both direct and indirect linkages between population and development; (3) that several problems previously attributed to population are due largely to other causes; and, (4) that the role of population is sometimes to worsen already existing fundamental problems and to reveal their symptoms sooner and/or more dramatically. The Revisionist interpretation still concludes that economic development in most developing countries would be faster with slower rates of population growth. It contends, however, that in some countries, population and growth may on balance contribute to economic development; in many others, it will deter development and in still others, the net effect will be negligible.

Indeed, different countries in the world have over the years held varying ideological positions on the place of population in socio-economic development. At one extreme are those who think that a fast rate of population growth seriously threatens the standard of living of mankind and that an urgent action is needed to avert future disaster. In the middle, are those who believe that although reduced population growth is not all that there is to socio-economic development, it is important to give serious attention to population issues. The other extreme are those whose standpoint is essentially that population does not constitute a problem and that social change will automatically bring about an adjustment of population growth to resources. In other words, the problem is not population growth, but socio-economic development itself (Berelson, 1973).

Today, there is probably no nation whose position agrees with the first extreme. In terms of population policy, most of the countries that have made any public statement about population in recent times are clustered around the middle and a smaller number at the other extreme. For instance, Portugal and Bulgaria provide conflicting evidence on the question as to whether or not economic development lowers fertility. Both countries experienced a decline in their birth rate with no transformation in terms of urbanization and industrialization. The same was true of much of Eastern and Southern Europe. Evidence also exists of a number of developing countries with approximately the

same gross national product but where fertility levels have fallen rather low while still remaining very high in others (Sweezy, 1973).

Irrespective of the level of economic development, three sets of preconditions necessary for a decline in fertility are perceived. First, there must be an awareness of a problem as well as the will or motivation to do something about it. Secondly, there must be a perceived advantage. Thirdly, the means must be available and knowledge of the availability of the means is necessary. These conditions exist in varying degrees in the pre-modern society and a decline in fertility may, therefore, occur even before extensive modernization takes place and may even aid this development process. Fertility decline will, however, not move fast unless efforts at modernization are intensified.

Demographic Situation: Past and Present

The Past

To place current demographic trends in proper perspective, it is useful to review some features of the 'Demographic Transition' in the developed countries in the 150 - 200 year period during which population growth rates rose from low to high and then returned to low rates again, but then with a considerably enlarged population base. Beginning in the eighteenth century with low population growth rate of about 0.5 percent per year, the transition began with a gradual reduction in the death rates, accompanied by persistently high birth rates. An important feature of most of the transitions of individual countries was a delayed decline in the birth rate often lagging behind mortality reductions by decades which resulted in a period of rapid population growth of about 1.5 percent per year. This period was accompanied by sustained and substantial economic prosperity, urbanization and structural transformation that eventually brought about reduced birth rate and low rate of natural population increase. In fact, the transition was mostly restricted to those countries that had entered into modern economic growth.

The Present

The demographic transition in the developing countries lags behind that of the industrially developed countries by almost 100 years. While the developing countries have similar transition experience with Europe with respect to an early reduction in death rates, followed by high birth rate and the declining birth rates associated with the period of economic prosperity, urbanization and structural change, there are marked differences. For instance, birth rates in developing countries are

on the average considerably higher than those at the peak of the European transition. This rate combined with a particularly rapid decline in mortality rates, reaching low levels early in the transition, has resulted into an exceptionally rapid population growth.

The current pace of population change is highest in Tropical Africa at about 3 percent per year, with individual countries including such large ones as Nigeria (2.93) and Kenya growing at a rate of over 3 percent per year. Regionally, the demographic transition is most advanced in East Asia, followed by Latin America and South Asia. It is least advanced in Africa.

Large reductions in death rates have contributed overwhelmingly to the increase in population growth. But unlike Europe where the decline could be attributed largely to gradual improvements in living standards and modernization, much of the mortality reductions in the developing countries had occurred without significant economic and institutional change. Instead, it has been related to a greatly enhanced capacity to cope with infectious diseases as well as improved communications and transportation which brought it a wide diffusion of upgraded public health practices (Kuznets, 1980)

Fertility rates in the developing countries reached their peak in the mid-1960s and have begun to decline in some countries, although they remain high by historic standards. In others, they are either stable at high level or still increasing. In Africa, fertility is high and stable. For instance, the percentage of married women of reproductive age currently using contraception is 27 percent in Kenya in 1993 and 5 percent in Ghana in 1988 despite the long history of population policies in these two countries (UN, 1994). The observed small decline in fertility in some African countries in the last decade is mainly the effect of Structural Adjustment Programme injected into the African economy in the late 1980s; SAP will be discussed later in the course of this lecture.

The Emergence of International Concern on the Effects of Rapid Population Growth in Developing Countries

The impact of rapid population growth was perceived to have adversely influenced the pace of economic development in the developing countries. Rapid population growth was conceived as shifting spending away from physical-capital investments and towards expenditures on social services like health, education, food, housing etc that are not productive. Hence the concern and clamour of international community on the evolution of population control programmes in the developing countries.

The decision whether or not to introduce programmes in

population became an issue of international concern during the 1960s when a number of forces converged to change the attitudes of political actors in both developed and developing countries. The first reason for a change of attitude towards rapid population growth was associated with the disappointment in the international community at the relatively slow rate of progress of development in the developing countries compared to optimistic expectations. Secondly, there was growing knowledge of demographic trends that became available after the wave of population censuses taken in the early 1960s. The census results indicated that populations throughout the world were growing at a much more rapid rate than either the countries themselves or the U.N. Population Division had anticipated or projected. Some studies reinforced the adverse relationship between population and development. Prominent among these was the study by Coale-Hoover (1958) which suggested that high fertility acted as a brake on development. Also very influential in policy making was the UN. volume *The Determinants and Consequences of Population Trends* (1953). The third factor that fueled international concern was the articulation within some poor countries of the belief that population growth was a major obstacle to development. A fourth factor that encouraged both developed and developing countries to view family planning as a feasible proposition was the appearance of a new contraceptive, the IUD which was thought to be safe, effective, reversible, inexpensive and easy to administer. The fifth factor was that at this early date, developing countries still lacked the ability to formulate a united position on development issues. Prior to the 1960s, there was no combination of nations willing and able to assume leadership on population or to persuade the United States to assert its influence on birth control in developing countries. Sixthly, leaders of developing countries increasingly realized that the well-being of their societies depended upon the ability to provide jobs, schools, housing and health care for the citizens, all of which tasks are made more difficult by rapid population growth (Finkle-McIntosh, 1994). Added to these factors is the ailing economy that plagued the economy of the developing countries and Africa in particular in the early 1980s. The economic misfortune hastened the adoption of population programmes in sub-Saharan African countries. These forces geared up the stormy 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest which adopted the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA). Despite the consensus achieved at the conference and the adoption of WPPA, the majority of developing countries did not share the concern of western countries in respect of the consequences of rapid population growth and high fertility. They continued to question attempts to redirect development assistance from

larger social and economic issues to programmes of fertility control.

A decade later when the Second International Population Conference was held in Mexico in 1984, the situation had changed dramatically. The objections of the developing countries that were clearly evident at the 1974 conference were strikingly absent during the 1980s. In the developing countries, a shift had taken place from the "satisfactory" fertility perception and no intervention policies to the "too high" fertility perceptions and policies to lower fertility. The region where the shift was found to be most dramatic was Africa where the proportion of countries with policies to reduce fertility increased from 25 to 49 percent between 1976 and 1989. Similarly, an increasing number of countries reported policies of direct support for the provision of contraceptive methods. Again, the change is notable in Africa where the proportion of countries providing direct support for the provision of birth control methods increased from 50 to 78 percent between 1976 and 1989 (Chamie, 1994). However, the impact of these policies on demographic trend and quality of life is found to be very negligible. A notable feature is the discrepancy found to exist between what is written on paper and what is done in the field which appears to reflect the state of administrative, social, economic and political affairs existing within a government and country.

The Nigerian Population Scene

Prior to the post war era, only scanty information was available on the trend of population factors in Nigeria, mainly because of the lack of reliable population data from censuses conducted in the first half of the twentieth century. The dearth of reliable population data really affected the formation and implementation of early development efforts, aimed at improving the quality of life of Nigerian masses (Macleod Smith, 1946 and Ebigbola, 1982, 1984, 1985). There was, however, an improvement in data collection in the post war era principally through ad-hoc demographic samples which furnished information on the trend of demographic variables in the last half of the twentieth century.

Mortality has been declining in Nigeria since 1950s like all the developing countries. The mortality decline had been attributed to the improvement in public health services as a result of the importation of modern orthodox medicine and health intervention programmes. For instance, the crude death rate was reported to have declined from 25 per 1000 population in 1960 to 17 per 1000 population in 1983 and 15.4 per 1000 population in 1993. During the same period, the infant mortality rate declined from 195 to 115 per 1000 live births and the under-five mortality rate declined from about 325 to 190 per 1000 live

births (UNICEF, 1994). The 1990 NDHS estimated infant mortality rate at 115 per 1000 live birth. Correspondingly, the decline in mortality since 1960 has led to an increase in expectation of life at birth which is an index of the health situation in a country. The expectation of life at birth rose from 40.2 years in 1963 to 50.4 years in 1993 (UNDP, 1995). **In essence, mortality has declined considerably in Nigeria in the past four decades, but the rates are still high by world's standard.**

Nigeria has been characterized by high and stable birth rates. The 1965/66 National Rural Demographic Sample Survey reported a crude birth rate of 50 per 1000 population and an average completed family size of 5.6 children (FOS, 1968). The 1981/82 Nigeria Fertility Survey reported a crude birth rate of 46 per 1000 population and a Total Fertility Rate of 5.9 in 1980-82. The 1990 Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey reported a crude birth rate of 39 per 1000 population and a Total Fertility Rate of 6.01. In other words, Nigeria has always had a high and stable level of fertility and Nigerian women have large family sizes of an average of six children. By the world's standard, this rate is considered too high in the light of the prevailing socio-economic circumstances.

The balance between the stable and high birth rates and the steadily declining death rates has resulted into an annual growth rate of about 3 percent per year. ***During the oil boom of the 1970s, rapid population growth was not perceived as an obstacle to economic growth. The only plan of the government was to continue with the integration of the family planning information and services into an overall health and social welfare system for the country through the National Population Council of Nigeria (Third National Development Plan, 1975-80). The population policy in the Third National Development placed much more emphasis on economic development as a means of reducing fertility rather than family planning programmes.***

By early 1980s, living standards of the majority of the population had worsened because of the ailing economy which emanated from the oil glut in the world market. The Nigerian economy featured widespread unemployment and retrenchment in the first half of the 1980s. Hence, the Fourth National Development Plan launched in 1981 indicated that the rationale for the provision of family planning programmes had changed. For instance, in the Second National Development Plan, the rationale was primarily "to protect mother...from repeated and unwanted pregnancies as well as to enable parents to space their children". In the Fourth Development Plan, the rationale was to enable parents to "regulate the sizes of their families".

Quoting available information, General Buhari, the then Head of State commented thus on the population situation that:

The population has been growing at a yearly rate of between 2.5 and 3.5 percent and there is no way we can attain an appreciable level of economic development with a population of this magnitude. In order to benefit from the improvement in infrastructure and economic activities, it is necessary for all and sundry to limit the size of their families to a manageable and economic size (Buhari, 1985).

The second half of the 1980s witnessed further deterioration in the living standards of the masses as a result of the introduction in 1986 of the Structural Adjustment Programme which was regarded as an economic reform in the light of the prevailing ailing economy. It is thus not unexpected that the first Nigerian National Policy for Development, Unity, Progress and Self-Reliance launched in February, 1988, was perceived as timely and appropriate. The objectives and modalities of implementing the programme were clearly spelt out with the overall goal of reducing the growth of the population from 3.3 percent per year in 1988 to 2.5 percent per year in 1995 and to 2.0 percent per year by the year 2000 (National Population Policy, 1988).

International agencies like UNFPA, USAID, World Bank, IPPF, PPFN and NGOs offered assistance in various ways to make family planning services available to individuals who would need them. The 1990 Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey reported that only 3.8 percent of all women and 3.5 percent of currently married women were using modern methods of contraception. By 1993/94, FOS in a survey reported that 11.3 percent of all women were using modern methods of contraception and 8.9 percent were using traditional methods. Although, the contraceptive prevalence rate is low by World's standard, these rates showed a remarkable increase in modern method between 1988 and 1993/94. There is no doubt that the drop in the birth rate between 1981/82 and 1990 could not be attributed only to family planning programmes. It can also be partly ascribed to rationalization of reproductive behaviour because of the rise in the cost of living of the masses. For instance, costs of education, health services, food, housing, transportation, coupled with high level of unemployment had been on the increase for almost a decade.

Some of the effects of rapid population growth on development were amplified in the 1996 Human Development Report of Nigeria which indicates that in 1990, only 24.7 percent and 27.3 percent of the population had access to safe drinking water and electricity supply, respectively. The report further shows that in 1988, only 35 percent of the population had access to modern health care services and about 15 percent of qualified candidates had placement in Nigerian universities

for first degree programmes since the inception of JAMB. The report indicates that despite the huge government expenditure in this social sector, the achievement in each social service is **minimal**, owing to the ever increasing rapid population. The desire to minimize the negative impact of rapid population growth underscores the timely launching of the Nigeria's National Population Policy (Ebigbola, 1984, 1985). The policy is almost ten years old and the following short-comings have been found in the implementation of the programmes since 1988.

- ♣ the concept of one woman, four children is found to be very misleading. It is possible for a man to have four wives, each with four children and thus have sixteen children which is contrary to the overall objective of the policy.

- ♣ Majority of Nigerians live under subsistence economy with the result that they are unable to save towards their economic support at old age. The policy fails to provide an alternative for children as source of support at old age. This factor is an important obstacle to effective implementation of the programme.

- ♣ The political will on the part of the government is too weak and it may cause the programme to falter. It appears that the formulation of the policy was in response to external pressure from bilateral and multilateral organizations who provided the seed money that made the policy implementation to flag.

- ♣ There are gaps and contradictions between policy statements and implementation of programmes. The contradictions have probably arisen from diversity of opinions in official government statements, reports and plans.

- ♣ There is non-enforcement of the policy as was done in China, Indonesia, HongKong, and Sri Lanka (Ebigbola, 1988).

The population issue has been viewed not only in relation to overall national development, but also from the perspective of the individual Nigerian families who may only be minimally affected by a development strategy that concentrates on such things as the gross national product without much attention to its distribution in the population. In other words, highly motivated families can at least maintain or even improve their level of living and their economic position by judicious planning of childbearing. Therefore, the policy needs to be revisited and revised to make it an effective working tool

so as to achieve its ultimate objective for mankind.

However, it is fairly unjust to perceive that all predicaments of mankind should be attributed to population growth. Population growth only puts strains on weak economies because of the investment necessary for meeting the needs of a growing population like education, sanitation, water, housing, food and employment opportunities. It is thus appropriate to discuss at this point what many scholars regard as non-demographic factors and policy issues that affect level of development. However, I now submit that some of these factors, majority of which prevail in Nigeria, emanate from demographic situation.

The Often-Labelled Non-Demographic Factors

Aside from the recognised demographic variables, the following factors have affected the quality of life in Nigeria since independence: political instability, neglect of the agricultural sector, financial mismanagement and corruption and the economic reform- the Structural Adjustment Programme.

Political Instability

Political instability has been found in most cases to emanate from the scramble for resources. Most of the countries in the world with history of political instability are countries with limited resources and famine. In most of these countries, population growth rates have been found to exceed the growth rate of the economy. The search for jobs, income inequality, lack of access to resources by some ethnic groups, the agitation for decent accommodation and the protest for increase in wages are some of the factors facilitating political instability in these countries.

It is widely acknowledged that the persistent socio-economic crises that have plagued African countries during the past three to four decades are the consequences of the persistent and perennial nature of their unstable political systems. It is very difficult for societies marred by internal strife, conflict and war, and with frequent occurrences of coup d'état to put in place a sustainable economic growth. Political stability, peace, national cohesion, unity, justice, fair play and equity, transparency and accountability etc are found to be the bedrock of sustained improvement in the quality of life of the masses.

What has been found in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries during the past four decades is a war of a continent against itself, judging from the number and frequency of violent changes in government that have taken place since 1960. For instance, there have

been about eighty changes of government in thirty of the forty-seven Sub-Saharan African countries (UNDP Nigeria:1996).

Among the thirty countries that have experienced frequent changes in government, Nigeria tops the list, with six coups d'état and ten different governments within thirty seven years after independence. As a result, no other country could have suffered as much as Nigeria from policy discontinuities. Every time a new government emerged, it has felt obliged to introduce changes in policies no matter how ephemeral or inimical to the long-term interest of the majority of the citizens. Therefore, under unstable political circumstances, it is difficult to embark on a long-term sustainable economic development programme to improve the quality of life of the people. There is, therefore, no doubt that an enabling political environment has become a *sine qua non* for economic and human development.

The State of Agriculture Since Independence

At independence, agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishery contributed more than 66 percent to the GDP. By 1994, that contribution had almost been halved to 38.6 percent although it rose to 42 percent in 1995 (UNDP, 1996). Nigeria, which in the 1960s was the world's largest exporter of groundnut and palm produce and the third largest producer and exporter of cocoa, has long ceased to export, in any significant quantities, all these commodities except cocoa.

The decline in agricultural production since the late 1960s has been due to a variety of factors. The emergence of petroleum production and export per se only played a secondary role in the decline of agricultural production. The primary factors included fragmentation of land resulting from population pressure which leads to small land holdings that do not support large-scale mechanized farming. Added to land fragmentation is the effect of erosion in some parts of Nigeria which makes the available land uncultivable. These circumstances gave rise to a high tempo of rural-urban migration of youths and able-bodied adults, leaving behind the aged and the children. This situation led to the neglect of the peasant agriculture for food as distinct from peasant agriculture for export. The old farmers producing food have been left to the mercy of market forces. Successive governments in Nigeria, have also destroyed the incentives for food production through their concentration of policy, research, extension services, and resources on export crop production without proper regard to the need of the food farmer. Successive governments have focused more on modernization than reform. They have followed the neo-classical path of driving agriculture from a predominantly small-scale labour-intensive peasant activities to large-scale capital-intensive enterprise with the

state playing an active if not a major role. These enterprises include farm settlements, farm estates, or plantations, agricultural development corporations and multi-purpose River Basin Development Authorities.

Subsequently with a decade of the emergence of oil boom, Nigeria became a major food importer while production of export crops declined substantially making the country dependent on a volatile international oil market to meet the desired public expenditures. As a result of the neglect of the agricultural sector, Nigeria could not boast of food sufficiency which is a basic requirement for the improvement of the life of mankind.

Corruption

The struggle for scarce resources is the major cause of corruption. In other words, the desire to get as much as possible from the available resources by fraudulent means is the cause of corruption. There is no doubt that societies have corrupt features in the sense that, some public money is illicitly diverted for private gain. Corruption takes place in transactions between private individuals or firms and public officials. It is the misuse of public funds which seriously undermines the development efforts of government. Corruption can thus become an institution's *raison d'être* rather than a minor aspect of its activities.

In Nigeria, corruption has become an unyielding obstacle to development. Corruption yields mismanagement and inefficiency that become great bottlenecks to development efforts. Everybody including the international community is well aware of the magnitude, scale and scope of this problem. Corruption is now regarded as the biggest and largest single employer of Nigerians today (*World Bank Report, 1983*). This menace does not provide an enabling political and public climate for economic growth that will have a favourable impact on the population.

The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)

Since 1980, several policy decisions have been made at solving the multiple economic crises - from the Economic Stabilization (Emergency Provision) Act of 1982 to the National Economic Emergency Powers Decree of 1985. By 1986, the efficacy of these policy measures achieved during the period have deteriorated and even the economy got worse. As a result, toward the end of 1986, the government adopted a far-reaching reform programme tagged Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). SAP was aimed, through the combination of exchange rate and trade policy reforms, at revitalizing the non-oil sector of the economy with stabilization policies in order to restore the balance of payment equilibrium and price stability. SAP

emphasized the down sizing of public sector and improving the efficiency of public asset management. Import licenses and agricultural marketing boards were eliminated and liberalization of the financial system was put in place. Other SAP objectives that affected the welfare of the population include the achievement of appropriate pricing by the removal of subsidies, especially those for social services and petroleum products, and the correction of the gross overvaluation of the naira through the setting up of the foreign exchange market.

Structural Adjustment Programmes have achieved limited successes in turning the economy around toward the path of sustainable growth and development. While some economic indicators improved marginally others were very disappointing. For instance, the GDP growth rate was an average of 0.93 percent between 1989-1994. The rate of inflation was very endemic during the SAP period with the exception of 1987 and 1990 when inflation increased by 10.2 percent and 7.5 percent respectively. For other years, the inflation was unprecedented especially for 1988 and 1993 when inflation rates increased by 56.1 and 57.2 percent respectively (UNDP, 1996).

The social sector was adversely affected. For instance, the cost of education, food, health services also rose astronomically beyond the means of the common people. Factories were shut down with consequent loss of jobs. The 1991 census figures reported an unemployment rate of 70.6 percent (*Nigerian Tribune* 14 May, 1997, p. 2). The manufacturing sector was also in distress during the SAP period, with an average of 30 percent capacity utilization. According to the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN):

"The economy is thus caught in a vicious circle of weak consumer demand- low production and weak economic performance, no growth- unemployment- low income and weak demand" (*This Day*, August 26, 1996:p40).

The health sector suffered severely during the SAP and post SAP Era. The brain drain of professionals and technical people in Nigeria is unhealthy and has some harmful effects for development management. Almost all the medical and health institutions in Nigeria are poorly staffed with qualified medical professionals. Brain drain is a by-product of SAP. With the poor situation in the health sector, a great majority of Nigerians were compelled to seek health care outside the hospitals. In a nutshell, the increase in the number of health establishments in Nigeria does not necessarily indicate an increase in health coverage.

According to UNDP report, 1996, the quality of life of Nigerians

was worse during the SAP era. Nigerians were less able to afford the basic things of life in post SAP era. Some experts have also argued that while aspects of SAP may be necessary, adjustment is having effects that need to be reconsidered. One short-run effect of SAP is that poor people get a lot poorer (*African Farmer*:1993).

Deficiency in Programme Delivery System

Successive Nigerian governments have embarked on several poverty-alleviation programmes to improve quality of life. Some of these population-centred development programmes include the establishment of the Peoples Bank, NDE, MAMSER, DFRRI, Better Life etc. The usual approach for designing and implementing these programmes has been the up-down approach where the beneficiaries are not involved in the conception and implementation of the programme. It is pertinent to note that the success of such a programme depends on whether people want the services the programme offers. This up-down approach can lead to wastage of meagre resources and replicability of programmes without any significant effect on the life of people for whom the programme is intended. The wrong approach is a common feature of several people-centered programmes in Nigeria since the 1980s and that may explain why they have achieved short-lived successes.

The Role of Poor Data

The problems of planning without facts have been well documented in Africa (Macleod Smith, 1946; Stolper, 1966; Ebigbola, 1982, 1985). Unreliable base-line data have seriously handicapped development programmes and the formulation of policies aimed at improving the standard of living of the masses. Reliable data base is now increasingly very important since development objectives during the past two decades appear to have shifted from the exclusive pursuit of economic growth to other objectives of importance to the population like education, health, food, employment and other 'basic needs' vital to human life. For instance, the UPE scheme launched in 1976 by the Nigerian Federal government achieved short-lived success, not because of shortage of money but because of unreliable base-line data (Ebigbola, 1981, 1982, 1983). The poor data phenomenon similarly affected plan formulation and implementation in other social sectors of the economy in the past two decades.

Nigeria has a long history of census-taking, but not much has been achieved. The results of the last census have just recently been released over five years after the census was conducted. Whatever may be the degree of reliability of the figures, the data are becoming obsolete for effective planning because there had been a lot of

demographic changes since 1991 that are not incorporated into the 1991 census exercise. The data commonly used in Nigeria's development plans are derived from ad-hoc surveys that have serious shortcomings for successful planning. Sample surveys are not necessarily a way out of the problem of population enumeration in Nigeria.

Reliable data base facilitates good planning and successful implementation in all sectors of the economy regardless of the rate of growth of the population. Rapid population growth may, however, create some complexities in plan management which on the other hand can be easily solved with accurate data. This is the case in a country like Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that fertility and attitudes favouring prolific childbearing will, in the long run, change with changes in socio-economic conditions in Nigeria. However, it is not clear to what extent fertility and the population growth rate will be affected in the next few decades. Evidence from the past two decades did not give a clear direction despite the economic crunch that plagued the country since early 1980s. One could only hope for significant changes in these variables if vigorous and persistent efforts are made to sell the idea of family planning.

It is needless to say that a slow rate of population growth does not necessarily lead to better living conditions for the population. Better living standards depend on the efficiency of other covariates like political stability, sustained economic growth, accountability and probity and reliable data base that will facilitate development planning aimed at improving the welfare of the people. In addition, much also depends on the degree of commitment on the part of policy-makers and executors to the advantage of the masses. On the other hand, economic development efforts which leave out family planning as an integral part will have only a limited effect on the general living standard of the citizenry. The new politics of population is that development is thus one which, while viewing the provision of an enhanced standard of living for masses as essential, does not overlook the population-resource balance.

What then does the future hold with respect to development and population? The following suggestions are hereby proffered for improving the quality of life of over 100 million Nigerians in the 21st century.

- ♣ To facilitate mass adoption of family planning, it is necessary to consciously and purposively alter the institutions and

attitudes that support excessive child bearing, especially since Nigeria is not yet out of the woods in her economic misfortune. These include early marriage, restriction of women to the home and dependence of female esteem upon male offspring. This last factor can be eliminated by the enhancement of the status of women which cannot be easily achieved if female schooling is abruptly terminated by premature conception and enforced marriage.

- ♣ To achieve an increase in the age at marriage and in contraceptive use as well as the enhancement of the status of women and a reduction in child labour, education especially at the primary and secondary levels should be made accessible to all.

- ♣ Stable political system and an enduring democracy are the national bedrock for maintenance of law and order, and sustained economic growth for the improvement of the living standards of the people. Unstable political system, on the other hand creates internal strife, lawlessness, waste of meagre resources and retardation of development. Nigeria in the 21st century should look forward to a stable political system that would usher in economic prosperity for the masses.

- ♣ People-Oriented programmes should adopt the bottom-up approach from conception to the implementation of the programmes so as to meet the needs of the beneficiaries. This approach is more realistic than the old fashion of up-down approach which has made little impact on the social life of the people.

- ♣ The vision 2010 should come up with programmes that integrate population factors into development planning.

- ♣ The Federal Government should reconsider the withdrawal of subsidies from agricultural inputs like fertilisers and chemicals. A nation that cannot achieve food sufficiency cannot boast of development.

- ♣ The problem of reliable data for planning should be properly taken care of in the 21st century. Nigeria has a long history of almost a century of census taking, but it is still difficult to boast of a successful census exercise. Efforts should be made in the

21st century to provide the country with the needed accurate population data for effective planning and development of the masses.

♠ A notable feature in decision making and implementation in Nigeria is the existence of gaps and contradictions between policy statements and implementation of programmes, be it economic, agricultural, educational, health and population. The administrative inefficiency has affected several rosy plans that were conceived, but never had any impact on the quality of life of the people. Policy and decision makers should make efforts in the 21st century to bridge the gaps between statement and action for effective development strategy.

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