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An overview of world poverty and purchasing power parity: the Nigerian Gum Arabic marketers' experience

Research Paper

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ABSTRACT

Poverty though has diverse conceptuality, but the general consensus is that it is a living condition in which a person or group of persons are unable to satisfy their most basic requirements for survival in terms of nutrition, shelter, clothing, health, transport, education and recreation. Poverty is believed to have negative impact on both physical and spiritual status of its victims as it deters its victims from observing many spiritual and social activities. There are many ways of measuring poverty; however the authors based their measurement international definition of poverty which says that any condition that makes one to live on less than U.S $1.00 per day is poor. Nigeria with a population of about 170 million has more than 70% wallows in abject poverty despite the fact that it has the largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the continent, Africa. The study thus examined gum arabic marketing as one possible way for poverty alleviation in Northern Nigeria. A reviewed of poverty trend, the effects of gum arabic marketing on the income status on respondents and government programmes in tackling the menaces in Nigeria were focused. The recommendations were that the small and medium enterprises (SME), and the mandates of Bank of Industries should be empowered enough to encourage Nigerians to venture into exploitations of all natural resources in the country including gum Arabic in order to alleviate the poverty situation ravaging the country.

Key Words: Poverty, Nigeria, Gum Arabic marketing, income status.

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that there are differences in living conditions and standards among people around the world. This is due to the differences in the economic growth rates and productivity that vary from nation to nation (Victor, 2002). In poverty perspective, it is evident that some countries are poor; some are fairly well off, while others are rich. This is a translation of the individuals' economic contribution to the nation. Poverty analysis however, is always relative, thus Schwarz (1998) stated that although millions of Americans cannot make a decent living" yet what most people in the United States today regard as "stark poverty, would seem like luxury in parts of Asia and Africa" (Shaohua *et al.* 2007). Similarly, a poor person in Nigeria might not be perceived as such by other Africans in dire economic needs. There are many factors / indices that constitute poverty measures. However, a person's income could be a good yard stick in determining how a person is doing economically, as inadequate income is a strong predisposing factor for an impoverished life" (Sen 1999). In the same vein, judging whether the economy of a nation is doing well or not, it is usually to compare the total income of everyone in the economy with another one or the global economy. The most common economic tool for this is the Gross National Product (GNP). This is defined as the total income earned by a nation's permanent residents at a given period, (Mankiw, 2001). The average income of individuals of any nation is the GNP per capita of that country. On the other hand, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the market value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given period of time including income that a nation's citizens earn abroad and excluding income that foreigners earn in the country. Given the indices currently used by international organizations, Nigeria's current GNP per capita of about $260 is below that of less affluent countries such as Bangladesh with a per capita income of $370. Nigeria records low per capita income compares with even those smaller African countries such as South Africa which has a per capita income of $3, 170, and Botswana with a per capita income of $3, 240 (The

Commonwealth Year book, 2002). Table 1 (Appendix) also highlights the GDP per capita of African countries. Nigeria's poor per capita income becomes more frightening when compared with those of some western nations. For instance, the GNP per capita of United States was about $27,086 in 1996 (USAID 2002); and recently that of Britain was put at $23, 590 (The Commonwealth Year book, 2002). This is not to mention the impressive economic performances of the four Asian Tigers of Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Mankiw (2001) thus said, a nation's standard of living is determined, among other things, by the economic condition of the nation and the productivity of her citizens (the quantity of the goods and services that a worker can produce for each hour of work). This implies that a country may prosper if her citizens are productive and shun corruption and *bad work ethic,* as "culture," is also a significant determining factor of a nation's ability to prosper (Lindsay, 2000).Prosperity is the ability of an individual, group, or nation to provide shelter, nutrition, and other material goods that enable people to live a good life (Ray, 1998). The life of any person burdened with the vices of poverty is miserable. In general, it is resolved to say that poverty destroys aspirations, hope, and happiness. Poverty affects tolerance of others, and affects positive relationships with other people. It also affects ones disposition to participate in community affairs, interpersonal trust and self-satisfaction (Inglehart, 1997; Fairbanks 2000,). Relating these to Nigeria society explains the possible reasons for her brain drain through emigration of many highly educated workers to rich countries where they enjoy a higher standard of living (Mankiw 2001) at the expense of their mother land. The paper therefore reviewed world poverty in relation to income status (GDP) with an insight on the Nigerians' Gum Arabic marketers.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Poverty concepts and evaluation in Nigeria

 In an economic term, the international definition of poverty is any condition that makes one to live on less than U.S $1.00 per day. Poverty is believed to have negative impact on both physical and spiritual status of its victims. It is physically noted on its victims' daily mode of activities. It deters its victims from observing many spiritual activities. Poverty in Nigeria remains significant despite high economic growth.

   Nigeria has one of the world's highest economic growth rates (averaging 7.4% over the last decade), a well-developed economy, and plenty of natural resources such as oil. However, it retains a high level of poverty, with 63% living on below $1 daily, implying a decline in equity. In general, the poor are those that 'have limited and insufficient food, poor clothing and dirty shelter

(Victor, 2002), cannot afford medical care and recreation; cannot meet family and community obligations and other necessities of life. In other words, people are regarded as "poverty-stricken'' when their income, even if adequate for survival, falls clearly behind the average obtainable income in their immediate community (Victor, 2002).

   It is worrisome to note that in spite of Nigeria's oil wealth (the 6th oil producing nation in the world), the country constitutes about *70%* poor; and the 26th *poorest* nation in the world (Magnus, 2012, Victor, 2002; USAID, 2002). Poverty is therefore a serious issue in Nigeria. Worse still, is the fact that the nation as a matter of policy do not have any guideline to determine and measure poverty as is found in some countries talk less of combating it with much seriousness it deserves. For instance, in the US 1995 'Official Federal Policy notion of poverty guidelines', a precise dollar amounts of about $15,150 for a family of four was stipulated. Poverty guidelines, which are issued by The Department of Health and Human Services, determine financial eligibility for federal programs and household incomes for basic necessities. A family whose income is below the set amount is considered living below the poverty line (Poverty guidelines, journalofpoverty.org). The poverty threshold, (which is the statistical version of the poverty guidelines), is used by the 'Census Bureau' to calculate the number of persons in poverty in the United States (Schwarz .1998; USAID, 2002). No tresses of these departments/activities are seen in Nigeria.

Categories of poverty

Victor (2002) cited Galbraith 1958 who classified poverty into two main categories, namely: Case Poverty, and Insular Poverty.

(i) **Case Poverty:** is the kind of poverty seen in many rural and urban communities. It manifests in poor family with "junk-filled yard and dirty children playing in the bare dirt". Other qualities peculiar to the individuals or family afflicted by *Case* poverty are: mental deficiency, bad health, inability to adapt to the discipline of modern economic life, excessive procreation, alcoholism, insufficient education, or perhaps a combination of several of these handicaps including social vices (Victor, 2002). These conditions hinder them from having the general wellbeing of life. This type of poverty is common in Nigeria, especially in the North – Eastern part. Alleviating a case poverty requires the study of the poor individual's characteristics and that of the environment he lives in. Because case poverty is mainly caused by the individual inability to live a productive life based on personal deficiency.

(ii) **Insular Poverty:** Victor **(**2002) defined this type of poverty as one that manifests itself as an *Island* whereby nearly everyone is poor in the community. It is assumed

Table 1. Level of Poverty Situation in Nigeria as at 2008.

Geographical Location	% population of Poverty
North West	72.2%
North East	71.2%
North Central	67%
South East	26.7%
South South	35.1%
South West	43.1%

Source: Magnus, (2012).

that the environment in which the people found themselves may have made them poor or might have frustrated them. In Nigeria, this type of poverty is only found on assumption and based on ignorance; but in the real sense, Nigeria has fertile land which can lead to wealth establishment when exploited rather than poverty alleviation. Although there is presence of inadequate infrastructure that will have helped to facilitate meaningful economic development in many parts of the country especially the North-East due to bad governance experienced in many states of the North.

The impact of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria

According to Magnus, (2012), 74 million Nigerians are poor as at December 2008, (Table 1). This dropped by one million from 75 million in 2007. He said the population of the nation's poor people was 80 million in 1999. His analysis showed the following percentage of the poor in all the six geopolitical zones of the country. This implies that a lot has to be done by governments at all levels to improve on the life of the people.

Magnus, (2012) also stated that by 2011, over 12 million youths were poor because they had no means of livelihood. It is dangerous to development as stated by the National Bureau of Statistics that 112.519 million Nigerians live in relative poverty conditions, indicating 69 per cent of the country's total population. It was also reported by the Central Bank Governor, Sanusi, (2012) stated that 70 percent (105 million out of which were over 12 million unemployed youths, mostly educated and potentially productive) of Nigerians were living below the poverty line. Sanusi said such high incidence of poverty threatened national economic growth and development.

The Nigeria's struggle in poverty alleviation, like many other programmes in the country suffers the   problem of inconsistency and non-implementation of policies programmes to the later. Different administrators in Nigeria have adopted their own poverty alleviation programmes, instead of continuing with, and improving on the previous ones. The first known poverty program in Nigeria was the National Accelerated Food Production Programme and the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank set up by General Yakubu Gowon in 1972. Nothing tangible was shown from the programmes. In 1976 General Olusegun Obasanjo came in with his Operation Feed the Nation. The programmes delegated university students to the rural areas to teach the rural farmers how to use modern farming tools that were not available. The civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari toyed with the Green Revolution Programme of 1979. The objectives of the programme were to reduce food importation while boosting local food production. In theory, the programme was a noble one, but like others before it, had nothing to show after gulping billions of *Naira*. The programme ended when General M. Buhari chased Shagari out of office in 1983. After that, General Buhari introduced the Go Back to Land Programme. But this programme was as bad as the previous ones. When General Babangida took over power in 1986, he established the Directorate of Food, Roads and rural Infrastructure (DFRRI).

The Peoples Bank of Nigeria and the Community Bank of Nigeria were set up to give out small loans to the rural poor. Even his wife came up with her own poverty reduction program, Better Life Programme, to improve the lives of rural women. But the programmes ended up mainly in making the richer ones well-connected and powerful at the expense of the common poor. General Muhammad Sani Abacha who overthrew the interim administration of Chief Shonekan in 1993 set up the Family Support Programme and the Family Economic Advancement Programme. After spending several billions of Naira to reduce poverty, poverty instead blossomed. When Chief Olusegun Obasanjo came back to power again in May 29, 1999, he promised to improve the lives of the masses. He has, however, left without a good idea established on ground of how to tackle the deteriorating poverty profile of Nigeria as Nigeria was still the 26th poorest country in the world. Some empirical studies revealed that in spite of all these programmes, more than 50% of Nigerians live below poverty line in Nigeria (Sanusi, 2011). On occupational basis, most of the poor are farmers or engaged in agric allied ventures. The Federal Office of Statistic (FOS, 1999) also reported that 70.8% of the poverty incidences in Nigeria are farmers; and 48% of this was in extreme/chronic poverty (FOS, 1999).

Table 1 in appendix gives a comparative analysis of African countries GDP per capita which indicates Nigeria to be the 19th highest GDP in the continent despite her status as the biggest nation in Africa. Alabi *et al* (2005) reported that the reason for persistence poverty in Nigeria may be due to the fact that, the causes of poverty in different communities and among different groups of people have not been sufficiently addressed. Hence regardless of the available resources at her disposal, Nigeria still have such a dismal poverty as many are wallowing in abject poverty in the face of plenty. Thus all these programs have largely failed to overcome

persistent poverty in Nigeria which could be due to income inequality distribution, ethnic conflict, and political instability.

Purchasing power parity (PPP); The implication on Nation's economy

The theory of PPP assumes that exchange rate of currencies between two countries move in a manner that seeks to off–set the inflation differentials between the two economies thereby maintaining the real purchasing power of either currency in the economy. After the Second World War, US Dollar becomes the dominant currency in the world (Umar, 1995). The stronger the value of a country's currency is in the international market, the more it enjoys the international economic transactions as this affects the purchasing power parity of the country's marketers at the international economic transactions.

At global level, the populations living below $1.25 a day based on PPP exchange rates, poverty rates for individual countries were compared. The country with the highest value of income equity in the world is Russia, with a value of 0.00, while the country that records lowest value of equity is Democratic Republic of Congo, with a value of 87.72, (World Bank, Development Research Group , 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Adamawa, Taraba and Yobe States of North-Eastern Nigeria. There are diverse ethnic groups well over 50 different tribes found in these states with major languages spoken as Hausa, Fulfulde and Kanuri. Other languages include Kilba, Margi, Bura Bachama, Chamba and Fali among others.

Sampling Techniques

A multistage sampling technique was used. The first stage involved the purposive selection of one Local Government Area from each of the three states making a total of 3 Local Governments. The second stage involved random selection of 3 communities/villages from each of the Local Governments making a total of 9 communities. Finally, 20 Gum arabic marketers were randomly selected from each of the 9 communities making a total of 180 respondents (marketers).

Data Source and Collection

Primary data were used for the study. The data were collected through the use of questionnaire administered

through oral interviews on gum arabic marketers in the study area.

Data Analyses

Determination of Purchasing Power Parity on the Nigeria Currency at International Market. CBN (2006) formula cited from Lothains 1989 was employed to determine the effects of Naira to Dollar exchange rate on the purchasing power parity of Nigerians at the international market. The formula is given in equation (1);

$$NR = \sum Pi\ Vi - (FC + VC) \text{ ----------------------------------- (1)}$$

Where:
NR = Net revenue (N)
Pi = Export price/unit ($/N)
Vi = Quantity exported (Kg)
VC = Variable costs ($/N)
FC = Fixed costs ($/N)

In effect, the laws of demand and supply for the currencies manifested and hence affected the net revenue from the marketers in Nigeria due to the variant purchasing power parity (PPP) of $ and N.

The level of this effect was determined using CBN (2006) formula adopted from Gustav Cassell, 1920 stated as

$$V = (Et - Nt)/ Nt. \text{ --- (2)}$$

Where:
V = Magnitude of valuation of $
Nt = Nominal official exchange rate of $ to N in the current period.
Et = Equilibrium exchange rate of $ to N.
Note: if; V = Negative value, implies over valuation
 V = Positive value, implies under valuation
V = 1, implies equilibrium.
To determine the Nigerian marketers' price competitiveness at the international market, the Real Exchange Rate (RER) formula as adopted by CBN (2006) was applied, thus:

$$RER = Ne.Pf/ Pd \text{ -- (3).}$$

Where:
RER = Real exchange rate of $ to N, Ne = Nominal exchange rate of $ to N during the period of study
Pd =Price of Nigerian goods sold at domestic market in N value
Pf = Price of Nigerian goods sold at foreign market in $ value.
The results from equations 2 and 3 were thus served as guides in order to infer whether or not Nigerian gains at the desirable profit at the international market that can really alleviate poverty bearing in mind the international policy recommendation of minimum living condition of US$ 1.00 per day per head as amount to live above poverty line.

Table 2. Income Status of Respondents Before and After Engaging in Gum Arabic Marketing.

Income Status $/day (₦)	Before		After	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
≤ 0.1 - 0.999 (15 - 149.9)*	96	64.00	9	6.00
1.00 - 1.999 (150- 299.9)	15	10.00	33	22.00
2.00 - 2.99 (300 - 449.9)	13	8.67	4	2.67
Above 2.99	26	17.13	104	69.30
Total	150	100.00	150	100.00
Mean ($):	**7.630**		**20.85**	

Table 3. Expenditures Status of Respondents Before and After Engaging in Gum Arabic Marketing.

Expenditures Status $/day (₦)	Before		After		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
≤ 0.1 - 0.999 (15 - 149.9)*	119	79.33	11	7.33	
1.00 - 1.999 (150 - 299.9)	27	18.00	79	52.67	
2.00 - 2.99 (300 - 449.9)	3	2.00	38	25.33	
Above 2.99	1	0.67	22	14.67	
Total	150	100.00	150	100.00	
Mean ($):	**0.85**		**2.44**		

Source: Calculated from field survey, 2012. * Figures in parentheses are naira value equivalent.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Analysis of the effects of government programmes on poverty alleviation

Trend of income status of respondents

Table 2 revealed that before engaging in gum arabic marketing, 64% of the respondents were below poverty line as they not could earn up to $1.00 per day. There were only 17% of the respondents that earned above $2.00 and are considered rich. This confirms to the findings of Ajayi (2004) who reported that 58.15% of North-Eastern Nigeria population live in extreme poverty, 27.03% moderately poor, and only 15% were rich. On the other hand, the Table shows a drastic change in the income status of the respondents which indicates only 6% of the respondents that were below poverty line, 22% moderately poor and majority (69.3%) earn above $2.00.

The percentage change in income status among the respondents was 173.3%. This implies that gum arabic marketing in the area had positive impact on poverty alleviation. This is in line with the study of Giroh *et al.*,(2007) on the analysis of farmers' awareness on gum arabic production in selected Local Government of Jigawa state, Nigeria.

Trend of Expenditures Status

Table 3 revealed the expenditures range of the respondents. Due to the poverty situation of the respondents, the result indicated about 79% of the of the marketers spend less than $1.00 per day and less than 1% spent above $3.00 a day. There were about 53% of the respondents that were moderately poor leaving only about 7% still spending less than $1.00 a day. The percentage change in the purchasing power of the respondents as calculated in this study was187%. This implies that the gum arabic marketing has increased the purchasing power of the respondents greatly. This is an indication of poverty alleviation among the respondents. The result lays credence to the work of   Zendillo (2008) who found out that agricultural marketing is an important means of poverty reduction especially in developing countries.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4 indicates the hypothesis testing of the impact of

Table 4. Test of Hypothesis

Income Status of Respondents	Mean	Std Deviation	Mean Std error
Before Gum Arabic Marketing (1)	7.6253	1603.789	130.949
After Gum Arabic Marketing (2)	20.8461	32.570	2.659

From the formula $Z = \dfrac{A-a}{\sqrt{n_1}/s_1} + \dfrac{1}{\sqrt{n_2}/s_2}$,

We have : $\dfrac{20.84612 - 7.6253}{\sqrt{130.949/150 + 2.659/150}}$

= 13.221/0.0868

= 152.

gum arabic marketing on the income status of the respondents. The calculated value (152) is greater than the critical tabulated Z – value (1.96) at 5% level; a positive and significant statistical relationship exist between income enhancement and gum arabic marketing among the respondents in the study area.This implies that gum arabic marketing had great positive influence in the change of economic status of the respondents. This indicates that gum arabic marketing can be used as a means of poverty alleviation in the study area.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that Nigeria is poverty endemic state despite her status as a country with the highest GDP in the continent of Africa. Different poverty alleviation programmes were tried by different governments at different times in Nigeria but nothing to write home about. Instead the poverty continues to escalate as about 70% of Nigeria lives below poverty line. The study also indicated that gum arabic marketing had a positive economic impact on the socio-economic status of the respondents in the study area. This implies that natural resources such as gum arabic have potentials to alleviate poverty situation in the country if properly harnessed.The study wishes to recommend that the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), and mandates of Bank of Industries should be empowered enough to encourage Nigerians to venture into exploitations of all natural resources in the country in order to alleviate the poverty menace ravaging the country.

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Appendix, Table 1: African Countries GDP per person, converted to US dollar through estimated IMF exchange rates.

Country	GDP - per capita (USD) 2009	GDP - per capita (USD) 2010	Estimation of 2011
Equatorial Guinea	8,759	11,045	14,660
Seychelles	7,683	10,727	11,170
Gabon	7,414	8,820	10,653
Botswana	5,995	8,116	9,480
Mauritius	7,146	7,582	8,776
South Africa	5,635	7,270	8,066
Namibia	4,341	5,244	5,828
Libya	9,570	12,248	5,691
Algeria	3,816	4,538	5,304
Angola	4,027	4,328	5,143
Tunisia	3,794	4,199	4,351
Republic of the Congo	2,298	3,112	3,713
Cape Verde	3,419	3,242	3,660
Swaziland	2,854	3,131	3,358
Morocco	2,847	2,850	3,083
Egypt	2,450	2,808	2,970
Sudan	1,388	1,625	1,982
Ghana	639	1,363	1,528
Nigeria	1,089	1,261	1,490
São Tomé and Príncipe	1,160	1,215	1,473
Djibouti	1,354	1,369	1,466
Zambia	1,027	1,221	1,413
Mauritania	1,044	1,140	1,290
Lesotho	651	1,156	1,263
Cameroon	1,095	1,100	1,230
Senegal	984	981	1,075
Ivory Coast	1,071	1,042	1,062
Comoros	788	817	902
Chad	699	837	891
Kenya	842	808	850
Zimbabwe	303	591	741
Benin	765	681	736
Mali	641	614	668
Burkina Faso	542	609	663
Rwanda	512	557	605

Mozambique	456	439	582
Guinea-Bissau	244	508	575
Tanzania	547	547	553
The Gambia	434	550	543
Togo	408	459	505
Guinea	418	477	492
Uganda	472	506	477
Eritrea	328	397	475
Madagascar	432	410	458
Central African Republic	446	428	456
Niger	375	370	399
Sierra Leone	342	325	366
Ethiopia	418	350	359
Malawi	352	343	350
Liberia	210	261	297
Burundi	174	245	279
Democratic Republic of the Congo	300	185	215

Source: www.imf.org/external/pubs. World Economic Outlook Database for April 2011, modified on 31 January 2014 at 04:04.