

Population Dynamics, Economic Outcomes and Development in Nigeria

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Extended Abstract

Description of Topic and

This paper engaged the issues of population dynamics, economic outcomes and development in Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, with about 150 million people, and the tenth largest in the world. While development is all inclusive and must be sustainable, its economic interface is very crucial. Economic outcomes point to the economic measures and reflections of quality of lives of the population in Nigeria. In other words, the economic implications of the population trajectories and its link with national development in Nigeria, like in other African countries, are very important and critical. Economic outcomes as to be deployed in this paper intend to resonate the quality of lives of average Nigerians relative to the economic performance as indicated in the existences of the people. This paper is premised on the belief that population dynamics affect the economic outcomes just as economic outcomes also have effect on the population and these cause and effect relationships between population and economic outcomes will ultimately implicate national and continental development potentialities and real achievement while the state and possibility of development also have implications for population and economic outcomes and performance.

The Theoretical Focus

Studies on the relationships among population, economic outcomes and development often run into contentious theoretical situations. They are divided between theoretical traditions that either sees population as a burden and those that see population as assets. Cases and experiences of the BRIC (Brazil, India and China) always come handy when these theoretical traditions are in focus. This paper also confronts this situation. The Malthusian and neo-Malthusian traditions see population growth as a burden to development while for the neo-classical growth model, population is beneficial to an economy due to the belief that

population growth is correlated to technological advancement and positive economic outcomes. These theoretical traditions can however not be taken in isolation from peculiar experiences of nations and the population histories and dynamics unique to nations. It is not advisable for studies to adopt a one-size-fits-all theoretical approach or be fixated within a theoretical orthodoxy.

A triangulated theoretical approach is thus to be encouraged for comprehensive coverage of major nuances of the issues at stake. An eclectic theoretical orientation will therefore be adopted for this study. This paper posits that the quality of human resources available in the population is very important in determining the nature of relationship that will exist among population, economic outcomes and development. Where population grows but capacities of the population are not developed to sufficiently drive growth, the majority of the population will be unemployed, starve, be in poverty and have low life expectancy. Also, the population growth will become more problematic when infrastructures are weak and leadership is bankrupt. Population will become a burden in this situation.

On the other hand, population growth may translate to more human resources and greater capacity to produce and consume and ultimately provide employment through functional industrial base and economic growth against poverty. It means increase in greater opportunities for the population and positive drive for development especially when the quality and capacity of the population is high. These two theoretical approaches-neo-Malthusian and neo-Classical Growth Model- were triangulated to research the situation in Nigeria. This paper intends to expand the frontiers of knowledge and break limits of theoretical insulations that have plagued contemporary discourse on population and development studies.

The data and research methods

Primary and secondary data were gathered for this paper. Government unclassified documents were reviewed as secondary sources to engage the issues at stake. Relevant literatures were also reviewed to ensure robust findings. Primary data were qualitatively gathered from critical stakeholders. Therefore, triangulated research designs were adopted to combine primary data collection, qualitative method, with secondary data. Sampling technique was purposive to enable relevant people to be selected for the study. Archival records were also consulted to be able to account for the past of the Nigerian population

reliably because the past is very important to comprehend the present and plan for the future in reliable manners. Primary data gathered were analyzed using qualitative software for data analysis and content analysis. Data were gathered on the Population dynamics of the country, economy, environment, socio-cultural forces, internal migrations, family planning and infrastructure, over the years, and for the future of Nigeria and Africa.

The expected findings

This study and paper systematically engaged the ligaments of population, economic outcomes and development in Nigeria. Findings will be very useful for policy and practice in the area of population and development in developing nations especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper will answer the questions; what should Nigeria and other African nations do to escape from the present population explosion and the attendant development debacles ahead? What is the nature of past populations of Nigeria and could they be leveraged upon to inform sustainable policies for population and development in Nigeria and other African countries? What investments have Nigerian government made in line of population infrastructures and human capacity and what are the implications for national and continental development? What are the economic situations in Nigeria? What implications do they have for population and development in the country? By implication, this paper is expected to find how Nigeria can cope with its population size and growth relative to its economy and sustainable national development.