

Neo-Partyism, Post Colonialism and the Surreality of Poverty Reduction Efforts among Bette Rural Communities In Nigeria

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Abstract

African nation states emerging from the burden of western colonial rule developed a propensity to heap the blame of their malfunctioning economies and political systems on the experience of colonialism. During the first few decades of the post colonial era (1950-1980), it was fashionable to devote full symposia, conferences and workshops to outlining the debilitating effects of western colonial rule, while using the same excuse to solicit political power from unsuspecting but enthusiastic voters desirous of improved conditions of living, especially in an era of self-rule. While this scenario played out, there was a gradual emergence of a bourgeois class, resplendent in perpetuating the very socio-economic/political divides that characterized the era from which the masses desire to escape. This situation was accompanied by a rising call for democratic rule, administered through the instrumentality of political parties, themselves, a collection of often strange bed-fellows, lacking in ideology and principle, and far removed from the yearnings of the masses. This paper examines the paradox of neo-partyism, post colonial fixation and the insincerity of so-called people-oriented poverty reduction efforts among the Bette people of Obudu in Cross River State of Southern Nigeria. The paper argues that poverty reduction efforts has simply become another instrument of political manipulation intended to whip the masses into perpetual servitude and subjugation. The paper concludes that the post-colonial experience of African nations is far worse than its pre-cursor, and that unless there is a revolutionary change in leadership, rural Africa will continue running round in circles, and hence remaining in abject poverty.

1. Introduction

As African nation states installmentally emerged from the experience of colonial, neo Pan-Africanist insisted on branding that era as the Dark Age. A growing consciousness among the few elites lucky enough to be such at the dawn of an era of self rule struggled with the daunting crisis of identity, strung between choosing to remain the white man in black casing, or jettison the identity that western education had enabled them to acquire.

This scenario was reflected, to varying degrees, in all spheres of the new African life. Having all of political and economic power trusted upon them, the elite Africans found suddenly that they have to confront the task of defining the future of their newly liberated nations. The period of the Pan-African fever was over, and the moment of truth was here. As this groping in the dark continues, there gradually emerged – to the utter disillusionment of the masses – a nouveau – rich class of a bourgeoisie who despised everything that could bring personal and collective development to the African citizens. As Igwe (2012) puts it, in his book “How Africa underdeveloped Africa” the only interest of the burgeoning elite was to amass stupendous wealth from the resources of their countries. This is possible because African countries have become the personal estates of official criminal gangs whose avowed aim is not the development of their countries, but the siphoning off of national resources into foreign banks.

While this is going on, the lowest of the low in Africa continued to live in abject poverty. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to assess the emergence of the political elite side by side their focus on poverty reduction effort and how they have impacted on the lives of African and the Bette of Obudu.

2. Conceptual Clarification

Several concepts have been utilized in the course of this discussion and they need to be operationalized.

Neo-partyism – This is an African or post colonial party formation where a majority of the ideology is the emergence of new African elite who wrestled power from the departing colonizer and create a tone for a new African state. This phenomenon is characterized by conqueror occupier mentality of winner takes all.

Post-colonialism is a period after colonialism. It is an era of sovereignty among African states. It is a period that heralded freedom, emancipation, political self delineation etc.

Poverty as used here is a condition where an individual finds it extremely difficult to meet the basic and essential needs of life that differentiate him from an animal. Such needs as food, shelter, clothing, medical care, basic education.

3. Neo-colonialism: European Patrons and Local Elite Clients and Poverty in Africa

After Africans finally “won” the fight for their liberation from the alien dictatorship of colonialism, many nationalists were later upset to find that the economic, political and cultural exploitation of the continent actually continued in what became known as neo-colonialism (Mwaura, 2005: 5). Nkwame Nkrumah, a leading author and opponent of neo-colonialism was amongst one of the first Africans to decry the continued stronghold of the colonizers in the newly independent states. Nkrumah (1975: 415) observed that even though these states were independent, their economic system and eventually their political policies were indirectly formulated by the colonizers. Neo-colonialism operated in varying ways in post-colonial Africa: control over government in the neo-colonial state through foreign financial support for this state or through the presence of foreign consortium serving and upholding foreign financial interest. Whichever way one analyzes it; neo colonialism resulted in the exploitation of the African states such that the foreign capital entering the state to foster development instead “promoted” underdevelopment (Nkrumah, 1975: 415). In some cases, neo-colonialism has gone as far as using troops of the colonizing nations to control or support the government of the neo-colonial state. For example, French troops remained present and active in French colonies long after independence: In May 1996, French soldiers in support of Central African Republic government fired at national soldiers protesting against their government for failing to pay them their salaries (New York Times, 24/05/1996). Neo-colonialism survived because the West had established a dependent economic and political structure on the continent which was inherited and never changed by the new leaders. These “ambassadors” of the colonizers as Mwaura (2000: 6) describes them, promoted foreign interest over domestic interest, maintaining the economic and political structures of the colonizers. They got involved in “brainwashing” their followers to support and uphold neo-colonialism. The mass brainwashing of post-colonial rulers and their successors, which has sustained neo-colonialism to the detriment and underdevelopment of the African people, meant that the “wrong” political culture was instilled into the minds and brains of the elites. Deji Odetoyinbo (1994) chooses to describe the instilling of the neo-colonial political culture into the African leaders as “brain-dirtying”. According to Odetoyinbo, brainwashing forces up the understanding of “cleaning or make pure” in one’s mind which is far from being the case with neo-colonialism. In opposition to this understanding, the minds of Africans “have been deeply and thoroughly sullied by their contact with Europeans”, Odetoyinbo continues, including all “contacts, past and present, willful and enforced, intimate and casual, malicious and well intentioned”. This idea brings back the thought of the kind of political culture that has resulted from colonialism and its successor: neo-colonialism: that is, a political culture of rulership for the good of the ruler to preserve power, enrich himself including his supporters and followers at the detriment of the people and the nation-state. Finally Odetoyinbo (1994) draws the conclusion that, the “brain-dirtying” process which continues even today strips Africans of:

“the vision which they need to perceive the absurdity of our economic situations; the mental clarity to forge more lasting solutions that would be more beneficial; and the self-regard and determination Africans need in order to move their minds and actions to the hard and painful places where these solutions could be found.”

The consequence of neo-colonialism is the resultant permanent client-patron relationship that existed and still exists in some cases between ex-colonial powers and the ruling elitist governments. The external dependence, propagated and supported by neo-colonialism, renders African states permanently dependent as resource-based economies, unable or unwilling to assert their independence and develop their nations. The patron-client relationship between ex-colonizers and the neo-colonial elite rulers serves as a foundation, that is, structural bases for the enforcement of neo-patrimonial rule for and in the neo-colonial states. African leaders like Ghana’s Nkrumah and Guinea’s Sekou Toure openly opposed neo-colonialism because of the nefarious economic and political outcome it had on African states. Peter Schwab (2004) thus classifies these two men as belonging to the radical group of African post-independent leaders but describes assimilated “French-Citizens” like Houphuet-Boigny as the “French client in Ivory Coast” and Sedar Sengor’s Senegal as the Francophile nation.

4. Economic Interest, Conditioned Aid and Its Consequences on African States

Africa suffered great economic and political losses under the exploitative and brutal colonial rule. This destruction was so intense that after colonial rule the continent was in no position to develop itself without foreign assistance. The raw materials and other natural resources which arouse European interest had been ruthlessly exploited without consideration for the local African population. In 1953, with formation of the European Community (EC) and the increasing unpopularity of the colonial rule, many European masters sought means of retaining their economic control and interest in Africa, following an eventual independence. Leading colonizing countries like France and Belgium did not want their oversea colonies to be left out of consideration in any European Community because of the economic advantages and resources that they provided the colonizers with. The particular colonial relationship of some European nations to Africa and other oversee colonies was regulated following pressure from France and Belgium under an "associative corporation" (Art. 182 – 187 EEC Agreement) in the agreement of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958 in Rome (Monar, 2002: 123). Through the associative corporation, the ex-colonial masters succeeded in maintaining economic relations with the ex-colonies within the EC. After independence, the colonial masters continued what they called development politics for the ex-colonies, based on their intention to secure the control of resources, the economy and politics of the ex-colonies (Monar, 2000: 119). Development politics as it was introduced by the colonial masters during the formation of the EC was intended to make good the destruction that Europe had caused in Africa through colonialism. Development Aid thus started as a mechanism to provide help to develop the new nations. The EC created the European Development Bank which provided funds to ex-colonies for the development of their countries. According to the EC agreement, development politics had to promote sustainable economic and social development to the underdeveloped nations as well as foster democracy and the rule of law in these countries (Monar, 2000: 119). In addition, Europe and the rest of the West (herewith after described as the Western nations) did not want to lose hold of Africa for fear that it could fall in the hands of the communist Eastern bloc that presented a political, economical and military threat to the capitalist West. With development aid, the EC hoped to reduce or stop the influence and spread of communism from the Eastern bloc to these new and underdeveloped countries. More than half a century after independence, with the supply of economic aid coupled with the resources in Africa, the continent is still the poorest on earth (UNDP, 2007/2008; World Bank, 1989; 1995): what is wrong and what has been the role of foreign aid in promoting or hindering development of states on this continent?

Many reasons responsible for these failures have been propagated by western and local African authors and experts already, all of which could be categorized under international factors that influence politics in Africa. Before engaging in an analysis of the *de jure* purpose and the *de facto* impacts of Western aid on Africa, a definition as well as an explanation of Western aid to Africa by one of Africa's recent strong opponents of Western aid could be helpful. According to Kenyan born James Shikwati (The African Executive, 01/10/2008):

In the aid industry, there are well meaning and well intentioned motives that drive some of the operatives. History however, points to the fact that the Western incursions into Africa were also clothed in good intentions, to 'civilize' and help 'preserve natives'. Having given the genuinely well intentioned individuals latitude of respect; let us go forth and define Foreign Aid as it is.

Foreign Aid is a bribe given to poor countries by rich nations to enable the latter access resources, and markets cheaply. It is also a bribe to poor nations to prevent the migration of poor people to rich nations. It is a bribe to poor nations meant to address rich nation's interests. We may all know what bribes (aid) do to our police force (governments), the police get fatter but the crime and traffic-offense related highway accident rates go up (under development of people). To the robber who bribes a policeman to ensure he/she is not caught – bribery is a good thing that promotes the looting industry! But if one were to ask the citizenry whose relatives perish on highways and their property get looted by thugs - a future without bribery is what they will go for. In line with Shikwati's explanation and definition on aid the good intentions of the West (*de jure* purpose of aid) have resulted to a *de facto* "looting" of the resources of the Africa people by the West through the accomplice of African leaders who analogically represent the corrupt police forces in their countries. In this regard the role of aid in bringing development in Africa tends to be very doubtful. Thus the verisimilitude of development (conditioned) aid and the cold war contribution to political developments in African are exposed by the varying but most often clearly negative overall and varying consequences. The analysis of the role and consequences of foreign aid and the cold war could be divided into: (i) aid and politics of tyranny, (ii) the impact of the West as a consequence of the Cold War, and, (iii) the "disembedding" of the democratic debate from within national borders on the continent and "re-embedding" within the international arena between national leaders and Western powers.

5. Western aid and Politics of Domestic Tyranny:

Besides the need for funds to build the new and crumbled nations that emerged after colonialism, the new nationalist governments were very often responsible for economic failures due to mismanagement and leadership flaws (Alemazung forthcoming). The bad governance of tyrants and autocrats led to a continual economic decadence and increasing growth in poverty level until, "by the mid-1980s most Africans were as poor or poorer than they had been at the time of independence" (Meredith, 2005: 368). These bad governments, after crumbling their countries, turned to their ex colonial masters and international organizations like the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank for funds. Considering the establishment of the "economic association", the ties with the EEC and the creation of the European Development Bank (EDB) which all provided funds to these states for their development, it is an astonishing paradox that the economic and political situations in these countries only grew worse over time. While it could be considered that colonial ties and neo-colonial relationship led to the transfer of development funds to bad governments and dictatorial regimes until the early 1980s, the introduction of conditioned aid still did not record any reasonable positive score (Easterly, 2006). When the Structural Adjustment Program – SAP) was introduced in the late 1970s, the intention was to "force" bad rulers to implement policies that would bring improvement in their countries. Senegal became the first country to receive a "structural adjustment" loan in 1979 and in the subsequent years many more African countries qualified for these loans (Meredith, 2005: 369). However the situation only got worse and the crisis in these countries became permanent (Meredith, 2005: 375). A good reason why the crisis became worse and permanent could have been the fact that bad governments, which were responsible for these failures, were still in command. According to William Easterly (2006: 133), foreign aid was simply transferred "from being spent by the best government in the world to being spent by the worst". Why then would the "best governments" in the world continue to finance the worst governments and allow this counter-productive effect which contradicted all the reasoning behind shifting their "tax-payers" money abroad?

African leaders realized that failure to make a radical break with the past and implement "revolutionary" policies that would liberalize the state and their economies, were never responded to with any penalties. Thus, the purpose of the money transfer like its name "development aid" which was to foster development in the receiving countries instead produced the counter-effect and underdevelopment because of bad governments which were not confronted with sanctions in case of misuse of conditioned aid. In Kenya, for example, the government agreed to carry out the same reforms many times in the 1980s and failed to reduce its civil service and liberalize its economy, yet this government received grants which rose from one per cent of the gross domestic product in 1986 to three per cent in 1990 (Meredith 2005: 373). Just as oil and democracy makes a good government less likely—the "natural-resource curse",—Easterly (2006: 135) writes that "more recent studies have found that there is also an 'aid curse". Most often, corrupt leaders receiving huge aid revenues vigorously oppose democracy to prevent more equal distribution of aid resources—the "aid curse" effect (Easterly, 2006: 135). According to Steve Knack of the World Bank, increased aid "worsens bureaucratic quality and leads to violation of the rule of law with more impunity and to more corruption" (as quoted by Easterly 2006: 136). While Western nations continue to support tyrants and dictators in Africa, because their leadership does not pose any threat to the resource and commodity base economy of Africa which supplies the Western world and their markets, Easterly, concludes that "bad governments attract aid providers just as sinners attract evangelists", thus if one carries out a thorough control, it is certain that, "donors make government worse". One of the tyrant rulers who benefited from Western aid at the cost and detriment of his people and country, former Central African Republic ruler Jean-Bedel Bokassa sums up the donor relationship between the West and African rulers with the following words: "We ask the French for money. We get it, and then we waste it" (Der Spiegel, 07/04/2005).

6. The impact of the West as a consequence of the Cold War

West and East rivalry, (that is, the Cold War) was greatly felt on the African continent. While cold war encouraged the interest of the West to spread its democratic ideals, this led to the "evangelization" of Africa by the West during the cold war, and in doing so, encouraged the support for tyrants on the continent. Nevertheless, to push the spread of democracy as the major reason for Western support for Africa would be misleading considering the fact that this support has continued even after the Cold War came to an end. It shall stated that if the intentions are good but the means are not bad, then the result would be bad and this would annul the goals of the good intention. Support for Africa by the West in the form of preserving good relations with tyrant leaders is not only counter-productive but raises a big question about the genuine character of Western support for Africa.

Nevertheless, support for dictators has continued in Africa in different forms even after the end of the cold war. Cold War or not, economic dominance and control continues on the part of the west and with democratically elected leaders who work towards the superordinate goal of the common good of his people. Thus the West have continued to support or ignore the atrocities of dictators like Theodore Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea: Recently, there have been protests from within and out of Equatorial Guinea to stop UNESCO from instituting a research prize bearing the name of this president. The prize name, "UNESCO-Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences" would honour a president in the likes Idi Amin of Uganda and Mobutu of Zaire like Obiang Nguema for life. This could set precedence for other tyrant to follow. That is, they can commit all the atrocities, deny the people of their right to rule themselves, oppress the people, steal state resources and siphoned state money. All they need is to use an insignificant percentage of the stolen money to institute a "philanthropic" program or award and they will be remembered for their "good work" for forever. Moreso, using the name of a credible and international institution like the UNESCO. In a letter to Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, Equatoguinean and international scholars and professionals are asking UNESCO to reconsider its decision to establish the UNESCO-Obiang Nguema International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences, and abolish this award named for and funded by President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea (Pambazuka News, 26/02/2010). As noted in this letter and by other opponents (Lynch, 29/04/2010) of this prize worth some US \$ 3.000.000, Equatorial Guinea with a population well under one million (633,441 according to CIA World Fact book 2009 estimate) and the fourth highest oil producer in Sub-Sahara still spends the least on Education despite the country's very high GDP per capita (according to CIA World Fact Book 2009, it has 30 best GDP per capita in the world). Supporting their arguments on United Nations Development Program report of 2009, scholars and professionals from Equatorial Guinea argue that educational standards in the country is amongst the lowest on the continent and amongst the country's of the 2009 UNDP report the government of Equatorial Guinea's spending on education was the lowest of all the countries included in the report from 2000 to 2009 (Pambazuka News, 26/02/2010). From this recent move by the UNESCO the needs of the African people as much as it is ignored by their rulers is not the concern of the West. On the contrary, these leaders can put their name of the world stage through a "misappropriation" or "wrong allocation" of state funds for their private benefits and to the detriment of their states: all this with the "aid" of the West.

7. Neo-Partyism, Post-Colonialism and Poverty in Nigeria

The post colonial state of Nigeria has witnessed a snail-pace progress towards a sustainable good governance and development. There is widespread disillusionment and this is exacerbated by the increase in ethno-religious violence and terrorism. This situation is pervasive in most developing nations. This is because one quarter of the world's people continues to live in absolute poverty, unable to meet their most basic needs and surviving on less than a dollar a day (UN, 2010). Over one hundred million children of school age are denied the right to a basic education and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the absolute and proportionate number of children out of school is rising. Each year, half a million women die in child-birth because they have no access to simple and affordable antenatal health care. Many children who are under five years die from malnutrition, malaria, measles and other preventable diseases.

Using poverty indicators such as literacy levels, access to safe water, nutrition, infant and maternal mortality and the number of people living on less than one dollar a day, Nigeria ranks among the 25 poorest countries in the world below Kenya, Ghana and Zambia (World Bank 2002). This is still the case despite successive governments efforts and resources devoted to fighting poverty.

Different scholars have given definitions of poverty. For instance, Watt (2005) defined poverty as a state of being in which one is unable to meet their needs. Baratz and Grisgby (1992) defined poverty as a condition involving some deprivation and adverse occurrences that are closely (but not necessarily exclusively) associated with inadequate economic resources. Edozien, (1975) perceives of poverty as inadequacy of income to support a minimum standard of living.

There is absolute and relative poverty while absolute poverty is a situation in which people are barely existing, where the next meal may literally be a matter of life or death as the cumulative effects of malnutrition and starvation enfeeble all, particularly children, whose weakness given them the tragic distinction of having the highest mortality rate for any group anywhere in the world in the world. Relative poverty is opined by Townsend (1979) as:

Individual, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved in the societies in which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those

commended by the average individual or family that they are in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities. (Townsend, 1979:31).

The first attempt at measuring poverty in Nigeria was in 1980 by the Federal office of Statistics (FOS). It was shown in the report emanating from this exercise that 27.2 percent of the population or 18 million people were classified as poor (Kahlid, 2009). By 1985, the Federal Office of Statistics estimated that about 46 percent Nigerians live below poverty line. This rate surged to 66 percent in 1996. Survey and the total at close to 70 percent or 90 million people.

The phenomenon of poverty appears to be more concentrated in the rural than in the urban areas of the country. According to the World Bank Report (1999), the number of rural poor is roughly twice that of the urban poor. Of the extremely poor, 85 percent live in the rural areas and more than two-thirds lived on farms. The distribution of the population has a geographic bias.

There are several explanations for poverty. One school of thought holds that poverty comes as a result of personal failing. This presupposes that people are poor because of personal trait. These traits in turn have cause the person to fail. These traits range from personality characteristics such as laziness, to educational levels. This follows that persons are poor because of the individual's personal failure to climb out of poverty. This assertion is anchored on meritocracy and Newman (1994) is of the view that those who are worthy are rewarded and those who fail to worthy of rewards must also lack self worth.

Another school hinges its argument on structural failing – this posits that key social and economic structural failing contribute heavily to poverty. This manifest in form of the failure of the job market to provide a proper amount of jobs which pay enough to keep families out of poverty.

Yet another school holds that poverty was a cultural characterization. This school outlines twenty cultural factors which depending on the culture's view of each can be indicators as to whether the cultural environment is favourable or resistant to development. These factors are values, mental models, etc.

Poverty is also a label – this means that the way poverty is approached, defined, and thus thought about play a role in its perpetuation. Maia Green (2006) explains that modern development literature tends to view poverty as agency filled. When agency is prescribed agency, it becomes something that happens to people. Poverty absorbs people into itself and the people in turn become a part of poverty, devoid of their human characteristics.

Poverty is also perceived as a restriction of opportunities where a person's life in the environment determines daily decisions and action based on what is present and what is not. The poor's daily practice of navigating the world of poverty generates a fluency in the poverty environment but a near illiteracy in the environment of the larger society.

8. Poverty Eradication in Nigeria

Different governments in Nigeria have tried different policies and programmes geared towards reducing the level of poverty in the society through a number of ways – through the activities of ministries and agencies, collaborating with international agencies and through the establishment of agencies equipped solely to fight rising poverty in Nigeria. These agencies include among others:

- National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
- People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN)
- Nigerian Agricultural & Co-operative Bank Ltd
- Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation

9. Poverty in Cross River State and Bette

Several decades ago, a development specialist opined that the framework for measuring development in any community is anchored on three structures: The state of absolute poverty, the rate of unemployment and the degree of inequality. If these parameters are improving, then development in this area is on course and if it is dwindling, then there is no improvement.

Consequent upon the foregoing, the effect of neo-partyism, neo-colonialism side by side poverty reduction in the study area is assessed based on the three basic questions raised by a Dudley See as quoted by Todaro and Smith, (2005).

The poverty level of Cross River State and Bette has remained unchanged showing no signs of decline. This is in spite of the fact that copious sums of money and loud noises are being made about public relations. These programmes

have simply become political instruments rather than real desire to address poverty. This is attributed according to Inqine (2009) that the governments of the state and the local government failed to target poverty reduction and unemployment within their jurisdiction. Moreover, the culture of implementing development and poverty reduction programmes without evidence (information produced by analyzing data) and as a result the area failed to improve on its poverty level because of their inability to apply existing socio-economic evidence to plan. There is existing evidence of gross poverty and unemployment resulting in under-employment, economic stagnation, declined, valuelessness have remained at a high level since 2004.

Persisting poverty in Cross River State and among Bette manifests in a recent reliable official statistics of 2007 revealing that unemployment and under-employment was at a very high level. The national composite unemployment index/rates remained unchanged between 2002 and December 2006 (NBS, 2007). The total under employed youth aged 15 years and older was 12.0 percent with males forming 15.2 percent and females constituting 9.0 percent (National bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Other indicators have also shown that there is enormous poverty in Cross River State. For instance, in 2007, there was a high rate of child labour in the state. Children aged 5 to 14 years who worked in family businesses were 59.8 percent compared to only 3.2 percent in Bauchi State (Nigeria, 2007).

It has also been shown that there is a persistence of poverty in the state. A large proportion of the state's population is energy poor because a disproportionately large number (536) households in the state in the South-South region (74.9 percent of households in the state resorted to using solid fuels (a description of unprocessed and health risky wood, frequently wet and poor combusters, waste of animals and plant matter, such as cow dung, charcoal and so forth) for cooking (Nigeria, 2007). This tragic scenario turns out to be interesting because the government within the same period promised reliable and stable electricity supply that could have prevented the large scale use of dirty and dangerous energy sources (Inqine, 2009).

The factors responsible for this scenario are multifaceted. On one level, there is very limited participatory planning, this is because stakeholders are only invited to make comments as members of the public after major planning actions and decisions have been taken. This is usually with a handout mentality especially during electioneering campaigns and such other dubious political activities particularly for the purpose of soliciting for votes and political patronage.

There is also the structural and institutional weakness in the state planning commission replete in the lack of a platform for collaborating with stakeholders. Another dimension is the lack of government's appreciation of and willingness to offer finance and material support to deliberate efforts at reducing poverty levels in the state.

10. Recommendations and Concluding Remarks

The discussion on poverty reduction and its failure in African States has been illuminating and has shown that many factors are responsible for this state of affairs. The colonial experience and the emerging new neo partyism and neo-colonialism has created a situation whereby the emerging African elites make very large and bifurcated noise about poverty reduction, meanwhile, both rural and urban areas of Nigeria remain very poor and backward. It is recommended that the entire structural profile of poverty reduction beginning from needs identification, prioritization of such needs, planning and implementation of poverty reduction programmes must be all inclusive and participatory laying great emphasis on the target clientele-the poor.

Beyond this, poverty reduction efforts must be de-politicised, removed from the whims and caprices of political players who no doubt will prefer to use these programmes as instruments for political bargaining. Poverty reduction can be assigned in the realm of 'real' judiciaries that are seen to be impartial arbiters and insulated from political manipulations.

Above all, mass actions and mass participation must be cultivated and encouraged at all cost a way of resisting the continued internal colonization and subjugation by pseudo – colonialist strapped between sane western civilization and primordial greed for power and affluence.

In doing this, the masses will be empowered to demand explanations and answers to pertinent questions and paradoxes of State mis- governance. Perhaps, this way the Bette people, to wit the rural African poor could be moving slowly out of abject poverty.

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