Sub saharan africa ssa politics essay

Sub-Saharan Africa is the largest current aid recipient region of the world since 2001 having overtaken Asia as the largest aid-receiving region. Since more than five decades ago, over $1 trillion has been disbursed to the region to spur development and integration into the global economy (Moyo, 2009; Dessai and Porter, 2009; and Handley et al. 2009). Despite the huge amount of aid flow to sub-Saharan Africa, widespread poverty, chronic hunger and prevalence of life-threatening diseases are unprecedented in the region. Institutions and scholars are now referring to " food-malnutrition-hunger problems in the developing countries as the 'third crises'" (Chibba, 2011: 76-77). There are also increasing dependency on aid, foreign technologies, institutions and value system, (Todaro and Smith, 2011; Collier, 2008; Kelsall, 2008). The World Bank (2008) on the monitoring of the progress of MDG reported that the first goal of halving absolute poverty has been disappointing in sub-Saharan Africa.

The failure of aid has generated debate among scholars and policy practitioner alike. This is because of the failure of fifty years of challenging aid interventions. Poor political leadership and weak state institution of recipient countries, and the agenda and conditionality imposed by donor countries and governments are attributed for the failure of aid - politics and economics of aid. However, the availability of abundant natural resources in Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African countries have not affected their fortune - so-called 'resource curse' (Ushie, 2012: 1; TI, 2012; Handley et al 2009). The aid-growth debate, multilateral and bilateral institutions and prominent scholars like Jeffrey Sachs and Arndt et al. in Chibba (2011) support the view that aid has a key role to play in achieving poverty reduction and development. There are increasing demand for focussed aid to developing countries, especially small states, low-income countries and post-conflict states (Chibba 2011, Paulo and Reisen, 2010). Critics of Sach's work on aid's role in development such as William Easterly (2006), Dambisa Moyo (2009) among others argued that poverty could be solved more by income redistribution than by growth and that aid is destructive to the economy of developing countries. However, the most important thing is finding workable and real-world solutions to address both poverty and development challenges.

The role of institutional quality of a country is more significant and not closely related to the volume of development assistance to the country. It is also more important than the geographical location and integration of the country into world trade (Booth, 2011). He said this could be an argument for lack of strong positive link between aid and development outcome in sub-Saharan Africa. Kofi Annan in UNDP 2006 noted that governance issues remain crucial elements of all strategies towards poverty eradication and human development - governance matters for development. Institutions, rules and political processes have major roles to play in whether children have access to quality education, whether people have access to basic things of life, and whether there is development or retrogression. Promoting human development is beyond overcoming economic, social and technological challenges: it includes political and institutional challenges, which causes poverty and insulation to development (UNDP, 2002; Abdellatif, 2003).

The governance crisis in sub-Saharan Africa is obvious in prevalent corruption, public services that are inefficient and inability of citizens to exercise their basic rights to choose their leaders - court without justice, public officials demanding bribe and hospital without doctors and drugs. Good governance is crucial in eradicating poverty and promotes development through effective institutions and rules. These can be achieved through accountability, transparency, empowerment, participation and rule of law. Failures of social policies often occur because the beneficiaries lack political power and adequate representation in the decisions that affects their lives. Developing countries will promote human development for all with governance systems that are fully accountable to the citizens. People can be better off when they can participate in the debates and decisions that affect their lives (UNDP 2002).

For aid to achieve its aims, the people that aid target must be empowered. Aung San Suu Kyi cited by UNDP (2002: 52) argued, " Development as growth, advancement and the realisation of potential depends on available resources" - and no resources are more effective than people being empowered are. Governance for human developments must protect human rights; promote wider participation of the people in the institutions and rules that affects their lives. It is not just about efficient, equitable economic and social outcomes, but must embrace fair process. Succinctly, it must be democratic " in substance and in form - by the people and for the people" (p, 52).

Todaro and Smith (2011) noted that development needs improved functioning of the public, private and citizens sector. Each of these actors has their weaknesses - accountability. These weaknesses must be addressed to achieve balanced, shared and sustainable development. Civil society organisations have the capacity to reduce accountability gap in global governance. Scholars and policy-makers have come to accept the fact that active involvement of civil society organisations in governance will provide solution to accountability deficit in global governance (Scholte, 2011). Civil society should be a major player to achieve that goals by mobilising communities, delivering services and shaping policies (Ibrahim and Hulme, 2010; Bank and Hulme 2012; and Collins 2012). To critics, civil society might aggravate the problem because they themselves are poorly accountable to their constituency - even if they have one (Scholte 2011; Steffeks et al, 2008, Kaldor 2002).

The recent studies and international commitments reiterate the necessity of increasing research on poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development. Official monitoring of the impact of Paris Declaration - where developed and developing countries make commitment to make aid effective by 2011 - showed that only one of the thirteen targets has been met(OECD, 2011). Making aid effective and achieve its goal remains a crucial goal of development. Democratic governance is the answer - good governance or 'good enough governance' is democratic governance from human development perspective (UNDP 2002; Grindle, 2007).

1. 1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research intends to study how to overcome constraints to poverty reduction and achieving sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa.

The research intends to answer these questions:

What are the obstacles to poverty reduction and development in sub-Saharan Africa?

What are the role of NGOs and civil society in promoting democracy in global and national governance institutions?

What are the roles of civil society and NGOs in shaping governance policies and as alternative provider of social services?

1. 2 METHODOLOGY

There is an extensive literature on the role of state and non-state actors in governance of aid and capacities of different actors in governance institution towards poverty eradication and achieving human development in developing countries. This research will provide answers to the above questions by reviewing literature as a secondary data source. This method is selected considering the timescale of the study. It is possible to carry out this type of research by evaluation of secondary data source in assessing the core issues and approaches in providing solution to the research questions. This allows the critical appraisal of different literature source. Ethically, there is no research participant, hence no implication on any. This research is limited to the review of relevant literature on role of CSOs in poverty reduction, development and aid in developing countries and no field research

This research work is structured in five chapters. The first chapter contains introduction of the issues in aid governance, the rationality for this research and research objectives methodology. Second chapter captures the rationality for aid in the development of sub-Saharan Africa. Its shed light on the challenges facing sub- Saharan Africa, and why aid has not been effective in reducing extreme poverty and promote human development. The concluding part of the chapter discusses global governance challenges and previous roles of NGOs and civil society in global governance and development. The third chapter discuss the centrality of democracy in governance and achieving sustainable human development. The focus of chapter four is the roles of NGOs and civil society in promoting democracy and addressing economic and development policy challenges. The fifth chapter is the conclusion of this research

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1. RATIONALE BEHIND AID, AID DEBATE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Attainment of development by any nation depends on combination of factors. These include the country's resources endowment and population; its government's policies and objectives; the availability of external capital and technology - international flow of financial resources; and the international trade environment (Todaro and Smith, 2011). External capital comes in three main forms. The first of these involves private foreign direct and portfolio investment by large transnational corporations and purchase of bonds, stocks and notes in the developing countries' credit and equity markets by private institutions and individuals. The second involves remittances of earnings by international migrants; and the third involves public and private development assistance - foreign aid. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, there are factors that make it unattractive for private foreign direct and portfolio investment. Political instability and incessant military take-over; economic factors and poor business environment; geographical factors - majority of the countries in the region are landlocked nations; and insecurity of life and property and poor infrastructure makes it " unattractive as a place for foreign investment" (Sachs, 2005: 63). In addition, remittances of earnings by international migrants are small. According to United Nation report cited by Todaro and Smith (2011), only Nigeria and Egypt have remittance of 4. 7 and 5. 8 percent of their GDP.

The above situation makes the role of aid in the development of sub-Saharan Africa significant. Aid aims to fill the gap limiting development by supplementing savings to boost investment for improving productive capacity and needed infrastructures that facilitate development (Burnell, 2008; TI, 2011 and Todaro and Smith, 2011: 702). The argument is that developing countries lacks adequate domestic savings required for investment opportunities. Coupled with this, African countries have low foreign-exchange earnings to finance imports. Lack of physical and human capital to attract private investment does not also help matter. Despite the increasing flow of aid, government policies and objectives are militating against its effectiveness.

Defining foreign aid is conceptually problematic. To Dambisa Moyo (2009), aid is simply the sum total of both concessional loan and grants. Concessional loans are funds to be repaid, but with a more favourable repayment conditions to the borrower than what can be obtained through standard financial markets. It is sometimes at the expense of the lending countries. Grants are money given for nothing in return. She mentioned three types of aid. The first is humanitarian aid. That is, aid in response to catastrophe and calamities. The second is charity-based aid. These are aid disbursed by charitable organisations (NGOs and other voluntary sectors) to " institutions or people on ground" (p7). The third form of aid is systemic aid. This is aid payments made directly to governments which could be either through government-to- government transfer(bilateral aid) or transfer through institution such as World Bank(multilateral aid).

The widely used concept of aid is the combination of all official grants and concessional loans. It may be in kind or currency. Peter Burnell(2008), viewed aid as including " transfer of finance, commodities and other goods, technical cooperation and debt relief" and grants is the common form of bilateral aid to least developed countries because of their inability in the past to service concessional loans acquired,(p. 503). The intention is transfer of resources from developed countries to developing countries to reduce poverty and facilitate development - the common target of aid now (Todaro and Smith, 2011; TI 2011). The focus of aid on the human development, poverty reduction and good governance is a recent development in aid governance. The reason for the new focus of aid is the increasing high profile of other non-state actors in governance, particularly, civil society organisations (TI, 2011, UNDP 2007). This weakened the monopoly of the state in promoting development and the role of these non-state actors are increasing as " the power of the state declines and global economic activities intensifies" (Dessai and Porter, 2008: 499). They defined the state as " the network of government, quasi-government and non-governmental institutions (traditional institutions) that coordinates, regulates and monitors economic and social activities" (p. 499).

The US Marshall Plan (1948-51) of post-war reconstructions in Western Europe success set spur the use of aid vehicle in promoting development, but the failure of aid to achieve same in least developed nations is a case for concerns. The contemporary experiences generated heated debate on the relevance of aid to national development and spurred the queries of rationalities behind aid (Moyo, 2009; Burnell, 2008 and 1997; Collier, 2008 and Todaro and Smith, 2011). In the first decade of twenty-first century, the common reason given by donor nations for giving aid are moral and humanitarian interest in helping the less privileged. Some development assistance has been in the form of emergency food relief and medical program - currently in Afghanistan, Somalia, Haiti, Southern Sudan and Syria. As true as that may be, there are historical evidences that support the claim that no donor nation give aid without expecting something in return. Some of the reasons are political and economic gain, counterterrorism - especially after September 11, antinarcotics - in Mexico and Latin America, and prevention of HIV and AIDS.

Common motivation by donor countries is political benefits. Burnell (2008) argued that even US aid for post-war reconstruction in Western Europe was motivated by political and concerns for national security and superpower competition with USSR (Todaro and Smith, 2011). The hidden rationale of the US Marshall Plan was mainly to contain the spread of communism. The success achieved in bringing Western Europe back on sound economic footing was clear, but it also gave US the advantage of influencing foreign policy with that part of Europe becoming its allies. It enhanced the emergence of " US-led multilateralism" (Moyo 2009: 12). The focus shifted in 1950s from Europe to developing nations while the agenda of " containment embodied in the US aid programme dictated a shift in emphasis toward political, economic, and military support for " friendly" less developed nations especially those considered geographically strategic" (Todaro and Smith, 2011: 701).

The Cold War marked the political contest between USSR and US. African countries were used as battleground to make the newly independent nations either communist or capitalist. The protracted disaster in Syria reflects the hegemony between Russia, China and US. In the Latin America, Alliance for Progress in 1960s was established to promote economic development of the region, but underlying that is the motivation to counter rise of Fidel Castro in Cuba and the fear of communism in other Latin America nations. The doomed fate of the Alliance for Progress showed its irrelevance to US scheme of affairs.

Dated back to 1940s, Britain government gives aid for infrastructural projects to poorer nations, majorly to commonwealth member countries and British Colonial Development and Welfare Act was established to fund social services (Moyo, 2009). In sum, Western donors give aid as a political instrument to prop up friendly political regimes in developing nations based on their own national security interest. Critics of aid argued that the fight against AIDS is to prevent it from spreading to the West and likely state collapse that might be a haven for terrorist (Moyo, 2009; Maathai, 2009).

There is strong economic rationale for foreign aid from developed countries. Chief among them are Japan and Germany. Japan gave aid to less developed Asian neighbours to promote its private investments and expanding trade. China's aid in Africa currently have same motive. The aim of Marshall Plan was for Europe to regain their social, political and economic stability and to regain their level of development. US injected about $100bilion (current value of the aid package) as rescue package under George C. Marshal, the then US Secretary of State in 1947, for post- Second World War reconstruction in Europe. The birth of Breton Wood institutions (IMF, World Bank and WTO) in 1940s with the agenda of restructuring international finance, establishing a multilateral trading system and formation of framework for economic cooperation to avoid the experience of the Great Depression of 1930s reinforce aid system. They were to enhance capital investment for reconstruction and manage global financial system purposely to share investment risk between countries where all member nation bankroll the risk involved (Moyo, 2009; Todaro and Smith, 2011 and Dessai and Porter, 2008).

Economic benefits also accrues to the donor countries especially from " tied aid" - loans or grants that requires the recipient countries to use the fund to purchase goods and services from the donor countries. According to Todaro and Smith (2011: 705), " a large fraction of US aid has been spent on American Consultants and other US businesses".

The recipient countries accept aid based on their belief on the economic tenets of developed nations as a requirement for the achievement of their own development and in some cases and lack of domestic resources. To some corrupt leaders aid is attractive because they hardly account for it and sometimes used to suppress opposition and retain power - military assistance. Moral obligation, some argued, compel the donor countries to assist the less developed nation on humanitarian ground. They believe that the rich countries, especially former colonial masters such as Britain, US, France, Italy, Spain Portugal to mention a few, owe the poor countries reparation for their past exploitations.

Aid and aid governance has generated hot debate and " political disagreement" among scholars, policy-makers and the public (Collier, 2008: 99). The first argument is on aid effectiveness in promoting development. Proponents of aid believe that it has engendered economic growth and transformed many developing countries. The Nobel Laureate, Maathai (2009), in her book The Challenge for Africa observed that Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) alone has provided over $650 billion in development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa. She noted the flows have not reversed the increasing death of poor African because of malaria, HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases. However, the impact of foreign media and development experts concern on Africa issues especially on preventable diseases has been helpful, but that is not the concerns of sub-Saharan Africa public officials.

Collier (2008) noted that aid tends to speed up growth. In Africa, he pointed out that aid has added about 1 percent to the countries annual economic growth rate of the " bottom billion". Though not encouraging, but according to him, the growth rate in those countries has been less than 1 percent or even zero. The aid addition to the growth rate is the difference between economic stagnation and " severe cumulative decline and without aid, cumulatively the countries of the bottom billion over would have become poorer than they are today: aid has been a holding operation preventing things from falling apart" (Collier, 2008: 100). The renewed commitment of the world leaders and international organisation involved in the governance of aid reinforced the position that aid is relevant to the development of sub-Saharan Africa. They agreed that properly administered aid would meet its development objectives (Paris Declaration, 2005). Critics of aid argue that aid does not promote growth and development, but contrarily may even be destructive to development of developing nations. Moyo (2009) vigorously criticised aid in Africa. She argued: " the notion that aid can alleviate systemic poverty and has done so is a myth. Millions in Africa are poorer today because of aid; misery and poverty have not ended but have increased. Aid has been and continue to be, an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disaster for the most part of the developing world" (p. xix).

In the same vein, Peter Baueras cited by Moyo (2009), noted that aid distort development as the fund ended in the hand of a selected few. He said aid is a form of taxing the poor in the developed countries to enrich the new elites in their former colonies. Baueras concluded that aid-based theories and policies are inconsistent with sound economic management and with reality of the situation in developing nations.

The argument that aid had had little or no impact on the development of sub-Saharan Africa is strong. However, one can be curious to ask what befell the income from the countries earnings from natural resources and other revenues. In reality, those resources also have not been of any impact on the development of the region (Ushie, 2012; Handley et al. 2009; and Chibba 2011, TI 2012). Moyo (2009) agreed on this and admitted that the problem of Africa is beyond aid because domestic earnings also seem to be a curse. Collier argued that the growth rate in countries with natural resources (oil windfall) such as Nigeria - that earned over $280 billion from crude oil - were not different from those other countries without such resources and with even negative effect of oil windfall on their economies. He lamented that more aid without changes in approach to governance is doomed to fail: " but as a general instruments (aid) for developing the bottom billion they would be more reassuring had oil and other natural resources revenues been more successful" in achieving development(2008: 102). Maathai supported this claim: Unfortunately, too many African governments have used their budgets, and their natural resources, not to invest in their people, but in precisely the opposite manner"(Maathai, 2009: 75).

Another dimension of aid debate is aid-conditionality. Formal president of South Africa, Dr Nelson Mandela, at the United Nation Summit in 1995 said " it is to perpetuate difficulties of the South for the North to relate to us as hapless victims to dictate to regarding loans and the employment of aid" (cited by Todaro and Smith, 2011: 684). Argument against conditionality is popular among civil society, governments and the international institutions involving in the governance of aid. Conditionality-based lending started in 1980s with recommendation for economic policy and institutional reform with Structural Adjustment Programme taken central stage. It incurred resentment because people viewed it as " coercive and offensive to sovereignty" (Burnell, 2008: 505).

Based on Dollar and Burnsides (1998) recommendation, selectivity was introduced to aid - favouring countries that show commitment to sound development policy and good governance. Critics view this as depriving assistance to countries that desperately need the help. Nevertheless, Collier noted that aid agencies have little incentives to enforce conditionality because people get promotion by disbursing fund, not by withholding it. He advocated for a shift in the focus of governments to the welfare of their citizens. He argued that the internal process by which citizens force government to be accountable to them is weak in developing nations and must be strengthened. To achieve this, external pressure is needed and legitimate: " Why should we give aid to governments that are not willing to let their citizens see how they spend it" (2008: 110). The focus of all stakeholders in aid governance now must be how to make it effective in meeting its development goals, because " aid is at the heart of governance today and it is unlikely to disappear", (Moyo, 2009: 66).

Aid effectiveness can be viewed as efforts gear toward ensuring the maximum impact of development aid for getting the most possible lives improved. Elliot Stern et al (2008: 20) based on the principle of Paris Declaration (PD) defined aid effectiveness as " arrangement for the planning, management and deployment of aid that is efficient, reduces transaction costs and targeted towards development outcomes including poverty reduction". The theme of PD is how to improve the way aid is delivered and it was to supplement PRSP. It demands from donors to harmonise their assistance with the policies and systems of recipient countries to support country-owned development (Booth 2011). Development effectiveness of aid is conceived as the effectiveness of aid in promoting development. Human development requires more than achieving economic growth in GDP and raising income. The focus of development must shift from national income accounting to people-centred policies.

Development is defined as " the process of improving the quality of all human lives and capabilities by raising people's levels of living, self-esteem, and freedom" (Todaro and Smith, 2011: 5). Sakiko Fukuda-Parr (2003) viewed development as the elimination of obstacles to what a person can do in life. Obstacles such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources or lack of civil and political freedoms. Amartya Sen (2001) noted that development should be viewed as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoyed. UNDP (2001) supported this by saying that the fundamental capabilities for human development are to live healthy and long lives, to be educated, to have access to resources for good standard of living and ability to participate in the life of the community.

THE CHALLENGES TO DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa are multi-dimensional, most importantly, the prevalence of extreme poverty and chronic diseases across the region. They form one-sixth of the world population, described by Paul Collier (2008) as the " bottom billion". Sachs (2005: 18) described them as " too ill, hungry, or destitute" to step the ladder of development. The webs of poverty make it extremely difficult to escape it on their own. Extreme poverty, according to him, means that households are unable to meet their basic physiological or biological needs for survival. Education is unaffordable for the children and there is no proper shelter for the household. Sachs (2005) reported that 93 percent of the world poor population lives in three regions: East Asia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. While it has reduced substantially in Asia, the percentage of extremely poor people has risen in sub-Saharan Africa (Handley et al. 2009; Moyo 2009; and Collier 2008).

National Bureau of Economic Research (NGO) as quoted by Maathai (2009) reported that the economic growth of the world grew at 2 percent between 1960 and 2001, but the reverse was the case in Africa. She noted, " GDP growth was negative from 1974 to mid-1990s and by 2003, sub-Saharan Africa GDP lowered by 11 percent than thirty previous years" (p. 48). In early 1960s, only 10 percent of the world poor were African, but in year 2000, African population formed 50 percent of the world poor. The growth rate of sub-Saharan Africa countries did not exceed 0. 5 since 1960 when the population was 277million. With a population of over 900million, the growth rate remains unchanged. Such economic performance cannot guarantee meeting the basic needs of the people.

Moyo (2009) also noted that sub-Saharan Africa remain the poorest region in the world with per capital income of $1 a day, lower than what it was in 1970s. The number of people from that region living in abject poverty doubled between 1981 and 2002. UNDP(2007) cited by Moyo(2009) predicted that by 2015, one-third of third of the world poor would be African contrary to one fifth in 1990. Life expectancy stands at 50year, the lowest in the world. " And still, across important indicator - life expectancy, literacy rate, maternal- infant mortality and income inequality - the trend in Africa is not just downwards: Africa is (negatively) decoupling from the progress being made across the rest of the world"(Moyo 2009: 6). Collins (2012) described poverty as one of the greatest challenges to human security and basic human needs. In Nigerian newspaper, the Punch of 27th February 2013, former president of US, Bill Clinton said the cause of Boko Haram (Western Education is bad) insurgency in the Nigeria and other sub-Saharan countries are rooted in prevalence of extreme poverty. Sub-Saharan Africa is now a theatre of terrorism.

Some of the factors adduced for these challenges in sub-Saharan Africa are classified as geographical, historical, cultural, tribal and institutional. Collier (2008) argued that geographical environment and topography of a country determines its wealth and success. Some environments are easier to manipulate than others are. This gives some society opportunity to tend plants and animal better than others do. The climatic condition, location, topography, species of plants and animals influences people's ability to provide food for consumption and export. These have positive impact on the economic and development (Moyo 2009). Jeffrey Sachs (2005) gave example of how the climate and location of Britain helped in its economic and social development. He said, " Geographical location of Britain enabled it to benefit from trade, productive agriculture and energy resources in vast stock of coal" (p. 35). He revealed that Britain has favourable climatic condition for agriculture and extensive navigable river ways for internal and external trade. The reverse is the case in sub-Saharan Africa.

Historical factors particularly, colonialism was given as one of the reasons for poverty and underdevelopment in Africa. Sachs (2005) opined that Europe superior powers coax weaker societies to take action favourable to their advantage. They " commandeered natural resources including natural wealth of Africa", and private army were raised to ensure compliance (p. 41). Maathai (2009) also noted that the legacy of colonial master - the territories they established - was meant to serve their interest. They had no genuine interest in the development of the local population, but in raw materials to their various countries. She noted that outcasts of the traditional society that cooperated with the colonial authority were elevated to positions that they would never have held in traditional societal institutions. This cultivated a system that de-emphasised merit and competence that still endures today. It perpetuates underdevelopment because merit and competence is not a condition in filling official positions against sound governance and justice.

Even after independence, the new leader faile