Socio-Structural Pressures and the Challenges of Survival and Crime Committal in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The continued high poverty indices recorded among Third World countries indicate their inability to attain development goals in target time. Despite development efforts of World Bank and other benefactors, Third World countries have continued to experience underdevelopment. The pervading circumstances are attributed to the ineptitude of leadership in democratic governance and in ensuring equal opportunities for all to pursue decent livelihood. Moreover, poverty and crime have been identified as having twin relationship in undermining development of entrepreneurship and regenerative economy characteristic of the current technology- and market-driven economy. This paper examines the interrelationship between socio-structural pressures, survival needs and crime committal, using observable instances in Nigeria as points of illustration. The social structure is observed to be exerting undue pressures on people for goal attainment without proportionate emphasis on accessible means. This paper is basically descriptive and analytical. It relied mostly on library materials. It contends that the pressures of the social structure on crime committal can be curtailed if the roles of the state are aggressively pursued with the necessary structures for democratic governance. It suggests a stronger integration of rural economy with global market economy, establishment of rural micro finance projects, curtailing incidences of culture of materialism and aggressive moral and attitudinal change as measures to encourage patriotism and discourage criminal propensities as survival strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Most Third World countries have suffered unprecedented high increases in poverty indices since the era of globalization (World Bank 2002; Martin 2003; Chen and Ravallion 2004). The pervasive incidence of poverty has not only threatened the economic, political, educational and social stability of these countries, but has eroded their fragile technological and development base (Khor 2003). This is arguably so because their natural and human resources are not properly harnessed and developed in readiness for the technological race and international economic competition.

In Nigeria, for example, human and material resources abound; but they are not adequately harnessed, utilized and equitably distributed. According to the World Bank (2002), concerted effort is not adequately made towards capacity building. In its stead, what is observed are the offshoot of bad governance and inordinate and odious behaviour that are characteristic of underdevelopment. Pervading circumstances that ravage developing and particularly African countries include high level of social and political conflict, social disorganization, disorientation,

war and genocide. Other factors included are the increasing environmental degradation that has further deepened the pauperization processes of the citizenry (Chen and Ravallion 2004; Muoka 2005; Iheriohanma 2006), political instability, disenfranchisement and political frustration that result from pursuit of inordinate political power and material wealth (Anumihe 2007; Nwagbara 2007). Some other factors included in these cancerous circumstances are erosion of enviable and development - oriented traditional African values (Iheriohanma 2006; Nwagbara 2007); increasing spate of social upheavals that shake the fabric of the economy and scare foreign investors. Also pointed out are a high level of social inequality and insecurity of lives and property, which make life unbearable (The Leader 2001). All these are pressures that challenge the survival of the common man in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa (Likoti 2007).

This paper is therefore, committed to examining the cause and effect relationships between socio - structural pressures and the challenges of survival in a crime-ridden (rural) society, using Nigeria principally as a focal point. The perceived presence of certain structural strains and Nigeria's leadership position in Africa makes the choice

appropriate. The paper discusses, among other things, the roles which socio - structural pressures play as pre - disposing factors to crime committal among Nigerians, especially in their efforts to eke out a living. It discusses some structural and progressive efforts made by the government towards poverty reduction with a view to mitigating the challenges of survival and ensuring sustainable development. The paper is descriptive and analytical in method. Secondary data formed the bulk of materials for the analysis.

THE CHALLENGING PROBLEMS OF SOCIO-STRUCTURAL PRESSURES AND NEED FOR SURVIVAL

While the World Bank (2002) acknowledges efforts of African countries, particularly Nigeria, in combating hunger and their strides in the economic sphere since their independence, it is obvious that absolute poverty, deprivation and inequality still pervade the political, economic and social life of the people (The World Bank 2002; Matobo 2007; Nwagbara 2007). No appreciable social and economic progress has been achieved through advancement in political leadership and institutional restructuring. These developing countries continue to be at the risk of being further marginalized in a highly competitive world economy. The reason could be that their social structures are not adequately organized in a manner that will provide opportunities for equality, good governance and economic welfare for all to adequately express themselves and contribute to national development. African states may have failed to realize their responsibilities to put in place an enabling framework or structure that encourages free association and equal opportunities to citizens, i.e. all genders (CTA 1999). The enabling framework should encourage the citizens to be more innovative, explorative, flexible to situational demands and to have access to opportunities created by information technology. The examination of programme strategies to improve on the income - generating activities of women in sub-Saharan Africa (CTA 1999; Spore 2007) identified certain constraints to include 'genderization', institutional policy and programme directions, governance, legal issues, access to the factors of production and the development of marketing knowledge and skills.

The analysis of the poverty situation in Africa especially suggests that the states are not responsive to the needs of a globally competitive knowledge economy and to the changing labour market requirements for advanced human capital. These factors incarcerate the citizens, especially those with mobile and high ability to excel, to the extent that those who realize their state of alienation revolt or put in efforts to ensure survival. This situation presents problems and challenges to their being. The neglect by African leadership to implement policies that challenge citizens to realize themselves, contribute to national economic growth, engage in productive activities that reduce poverty encourages acts and behaviours, even amongst its leaders, that brazenly run contra-cultural to African traditional values and realities. The comments and clamour of citizens, their general expectations and intentions for change of government, especially during periods of electioneering campaigns in African countries make these observations clearer. Instances of these are the 2003 and 2007 General Elections in Nigeria, 2007 General Elections in Sierra Leone, etc. The ethnic rivalries and political instability that have cost Africa fortunes in human and material resources in Liberia, Darfur in Sudan (Likoti 2007), Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, etc are but clear manifestations of neglect, leadership insensitivity and structural constraints on the citizens of these countries.

The observation that leadership in Africa makes little frantic and pragmatic efforts that will institutionalize sustainable democratization and technological development processes (Nwankwo 1998; Dinye 2006) appears to be real. African cultures have enviable ingredients and values that can be integrated into technological develop-ment. The Japanese technologies and those of industrially developed countries took off through the harnessing and integration of their cultural values and ingredients into production and management processes. These have sustained the modern technologies that have reduced and mitigated the effects of poverty in their various countries today. Management and technology, however globalized and universalized, do not exhibit distinctive mutability from their cultural components and background. In the African situation however, the leaders have rather remained compradors to the protagonists of globalization - the reminiscence of colonization - and have pre-occupied themselves with implementing policies of the World Bank and donor countries that seek to perpetuate poverty

(Obioha and Odumosu 2001; Iheriohanma 2006). The World Bank (2002) assessment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicates the doubt of any developing country, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, in making any significant progress towards achieving the goals. The assessment, for instance, viewed the interrelationship between poverty reduction through economic growth and acquisition of qualitative education. It affirmed that qualitative education supports opportunities and empowerment of citizens and decried African countries' treatment of investment in education with levity. Apart from supporting knowledge-driven economic growth strategies and poverty reduction, education makes vital contributions to the national innovation system and the development of human resources. The challenge in this investigation is to explore how the absence of supporting structures and neglect by government in Nigeria especially constitute structural pressures to the extent that they interact with survival needs to predispose the citizens to crime committal.

STRUCTURAL PRESSURES, SURVIVAL NEEDS AND CRIME COMMITTAL IN NIGERIA

The justification for being of the state is the protection of the rights of the people. The state institutionalizes, through the instrument of the law, the relationships that exist among people and social units in society. The roles of the state include, among others, formulation, articulation and concretization of private interests into public policies, conflict resolution, creation of enabling environment for man to satisfy his needs, mobilization of obedience to its policies and laws, thus securing allegiance of its citizens, ensuring freedom of its citizens and its continued existence.

Ultimately, the state exists for the conducive and harmonious living and happiness of the citizens. Where these are absent, the state may have failed. The degree of political instability, incessant uprising, constant multi-ethnic rivalries, the high rate of out-migration of citizens, high levels of unemployment, insecurity and poverty, etc. recorded in Africa and Third World in general suggest awful dereliction of duties on the part of the leadership of these states. In his examination of the Nigerian state and its quest for national integration, Anumihe (2007) argued that the multi-

ethnic structure in Nigeria stands out prominently as a major factor impeding the formation of a true national consciousness. While this is obvious, the structure may not account for the level of poverty, poor leadership and governance, insecurity and other structural pressures that act as push factors to Africans who, for these or the other reasons, escape to Europe and America in search of livelihood. Nigerians, for example, are found everywhere in the world today, no matter how remote the area may be, as a result of perceived or real structural pressures of non-responsiveness of state government, unemp-loyment, bad governance, poverty, etc. It is argued that, in all ramifications, the out-migration and escapades observed among Africans may not necessarily be a consequence of economic exploration per se. They may also be a conscious attempt to wriggle out of the psychic political and economic imprisonment and insecurity in the land. The changing pattern of labour migration in Lesotho that now involves more of women in South African mines, the socio-economic implications of such migration pattern on family and the criminal socio-economic engagements of retrenched mine-workers (Matobo 2007) indicate the pressures citizens experience as a conse-quence of failed states.

Political conflicts, violence and crises now appear to be ingrained in African social structure and relationship. The multi-ethnic and religious structure of the components notwithstanding, suspicion remains an outstanding ingredient spicing the expected relationship. Granted that social conflict is always present in human relations, it does not imply that every social relationship is entirely or partly conflictual all the time. The identified primordial factors should rather be forces energizing mutual trust, harmonious feeling, national consciousness and development.

The religious and political leadership rather reprehensibly engages in fanning the embers of religious bigotry, political squabbles, acrimony, dehumanization, human rights abuses and inequity (Iheriohanma 2006). The activities and engagements of these leaders are expressed in despicable undemocratic acts, formulation and implementation of selfish, individualized policies and programmes that sustain poverty and underdevelopment. In most cases, the oppressed in the circumstances engage in political violence, crises and conflicts as reprisals against callous

leadership that have little or no regard for the rule of law, constitutionality, principles of equity, etc. These leaders are also perceived by the oppressed as those who exploit them while, at the same time, use them as hordes of militants, ready to be used in times of violence and crises. The preponderance of sit-tight leaders in office in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc., particularly in military regimes, has been identified as a major contributory factor to this level of suspicion, especially among multi-ethnic and religious groups (Iheriohanma 2006). The suspicion graduates into withdrawal syndrome by a greater majority who are not opportuned to participate in governance. This subsequently, degenerates into acts of sabotage, unpatriotism, espionage, etc. These illicit acts also explain, the level of underdevelopment, poverty and insecurity that pre-dispose individuals to violence, vengeance, looting, corruption, bribery, pipeline vandalization and reprisal in a bid to forcefully partake in the national cake. These acts are characteristic of people who feel edged out, marginalized, exploited and structurally underdeveloped by the unsavoury policies and programmes of the state. These features pre-dispose individuals to crime committal as well as explain the aberrant and socially unacceptable behaviours, especially among youths.

Apart from the creation of harmonious environment for living, the state fundamentally is responsible for the provision of equal opportunities for all to express themselves; the development and establishment of economic ventures and relations; the provision of environment for skills and capacity development; the cultural, religious and emotional integration of groups in the polity; the promotion of education and literacy for human capital development; the integration of cultural values and ingredients in technological development; and, more importantly, overseeing the establishment and development of a knowledge-driven economy (society) in an information and communications technology-driven globe. An integrated market economy is never sympathetic to and patient with a fragile or failed one. Rather, it gloats over its exploits from the drowned economy like those of the Third World countries. This therefore, implies that the state, through its agencies, policies and programmes, should assist its citizens, with solidly founded economic structures and environment, to participate in the global market.

Globalization, in a world economic order, simply ought to imply equal entry, equal seller and equal buyer where exclusion in terms of level of development and discrimination in terms of sub-standard goods and services are not tolerated. Yet competition, efficiency and maximization remain the watchwords. However, this is not the case. In reality, the more developed economies influence and shape the globalization process with biases against the less developed. Absurdly, alternatives to efficiency, productivity and mutual competition in Nigeria and Third World appear to include cutting - corners, short - changing, illegitimate trading, trafficking, money laundering, terrorism, violence, and at best, deviance and innovation of strategies to meet up the deficits in the struggle for survival. Human needs are varied and man is always in need. He must explore opportunities for survival, especially where his access to national cake is perceived to be blocked.

In a world of 'imperious biological drives' (Merton 1970), open competition, communications- and technology-driven exploration of opportunities, the ability of society and the social structure to control man appears to be challenged. In the process of exploration, the potency of man in satisfying his biological impulses and drives thwart and dislocate the capacity of the institutionalized social control system as well as the 'natural' ecosystem. The depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, dislocation of traditional economic engagements of the people through technological exploits (Iheriohanma 2006) and introduction of 'alternative' 'universalized' democratic principles are but few examples to substantiate the challenged incapacity of the traditional structures to control man's explorative drives. What this implies is that, in the absence of the structural control measures, man is bewildered and he experiences consternation. This is so because, the same social structure that demands conformity to structural goals and adaptive means, exerts pressure on man to achieve an improved livelihood. Between the period of dislocation and normalcy as a result of man's effort to meet the societal demands for achievement, there is a gap and people mostly are devastated; they experience estrangement and anomie. In this confused situation, those in Merton's 'innovation' and 'rebellious' adaptation modes explore, sometimes, violent criminal means for survival.

A major tenet of the structural conflict theory

opines that incompatible interests in relation to competition for assumed scarce resources are factors explaining social conflicts and crime committal. The historical materialism of Karl Marx attributes material basis to social life. This develops a mode of life that shapes human nature. It implies that the nature of humanity and nature of society derive primarily from the production of material life. In a capitalist economy that is a nurturing environment for globalization and integrated market economy to thrive, contradictions are bound to be created, particularly since ownership of means of production is private. Only a minority is able to control, command and appropriate the fruits of labour of the majority (Haralambos et al. 2004). This gives rise to an awareness of contradiction that is already built into the economic structure and social relations (Iheriohanma 2006). It will not be presumptive to argue that such a structured system will often be mutable to a society characterized by economic and political exclusionism, exploitation, extreme structural poverty, unemployment, diseases, human rights abuses and injustice. This abnormal structural environment accounts for the sources of corruption and nepotism in public offices, among public (political) office holders, in industries, manufacturing and service sectors, even in rural communities. This remains a consequence of structural pressures on everyone to achieve in the midst of blocked access. It presents constant sources of conflictual relationship amongst individuals, groups and component elements and structures. Taking a cue from Merton (1970), the blocked access presents structural strains and anomie. The terrible structural strains constitute sources for breaking the rules and norms governing relationships and living by the affected individuals and groups in the society. The social structure and cultural values obviously exert definite pressures on members to conform. Where there is a lag, amongst some non-priviledged members in the society to access institutional goals as a result of blocked cultural means, it is evident that they will feel discomforted and alienated. It is also not out of place to argue that any open society that admonishes its members on conformity, equality, egalitarianism, etc. yet denies a greater majority equal access and empowerment to the political and economic resources of the land creates contradictions in its structures. The strains evoked engender suspicion, bad blood, conflictual relationships, apprehension and aberrant behaviours that are accommodated by invitational crime committal. It creates crave for aggressive material acquisition and aggrandizement. The conscious assessment of the blocked access induces innovation and rebellious acts, especially among unemployed graduate youths who feel estranged in the society. It is an issue bothering on consciousness and awareness.

The incipient culture of materialism that has become a driving force in Africa, and particularly Nigeria, is devastating livelihood and development in the continent. It appears to manifest in the society's structural emphasis on material acquisition, group success and individual attainment of goals. This culture characterizes an open capitalist society that passionately emphasizes inordinate and uncoordinated craze and strive for success. This society has institutionalized cultural goals and institutionalized means that most members in the society appear to accept as unrealizable channels for goal attainment. The open competitive society disproportionately emphasizes the aspirational goals against the societally accepted or normatively approved means of goal attainment. This same society creates disjunctions in the minds of people and contradictions in the structure to the extent that the abundant natural and human resources are not channeled for human and societal growth and development. The assumed lifestyle of profligacy, in-appropriation, mismanagement and mal-administration flourish and devastate the conscience of the people. The beauty of abundance in the land is therefore, interrelated with inadequacies. This inordinate craze for materialism begets poor democratic governance, sit-tight leadership in Africa, dilapidated infrastructures that could have stood as foundation blocks to leapfrog nations into greatness, fragile economy, excessive hardship, poverty, excessive expectations and demands on political leaders and crimes of all kinds. These include drug-peddling, pipeline vandalization, cultism, examination malpractice, corruption, fraud and pilfering of public funds; just as alternative sources of livelihood. These have negative impacts on human and national development.

It beats the imagination of a critical mind to observe hordes of qualified graduates who have been out of school for upwards of five years; or taken to menial service activities such as 'inaga' or 'okada' (commercial motor cycle riding); or accepted a job as itinerant waste disposal agents

going from streets to streets for refuse collection; or engaged as commercial bus conductors or serve as vendors of recharge cards for global system of mobile communications (GSM) calls. The projection is that these hordes may not hold on to these unprofitable and non-regenerative jobs for too long. The realization of their economic status vis-à-vis their educational background, qualifications and professions ignite feelings of neglect and deprivation. This is more so in a country imbued with natural resources like Nigeria but lacks managerial capacity to harness and appropriately channel the resources. This explains the degree and level of youth restiveness, especially in the Niger Delta area (the oil wealth of Nigeria), examination malpractice, ritual killing, cultism, armed robbery and unthinkable sorts of crimes. The absurdity lies between reconciling a land full of milk and honey on one hand, and poverty, mismanagement of resources at the political leadership level, inefficiency in government and money laundering on the other. In Nigeria today, most jobless youths join politics at least to ensure they survive through 'descent' stealing of public funds. Joining politics or founding a Pentecostal ministry or church has for a while now, remained an alternative and surest source of economic engagement to the teaming unemployed.

EFFORTS AT POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

In Nigeria and particularly Ghana, efforts have been made by successive governments to alleviate poverty and mitigate the effects of structural pressures by creating opportunities for the rural poor through micro-financing programmes and job creation (Dinye 2006). These projects are frustrated because, in countries where more than 60 per cent of the labour force engages in agriculture in the rural communities, it is expected that policies should accommodate their needs and peculiarities. The policies should be mindful of the very poor that have reasonable frontier economic resources but are structurally handicapped. The policy formulation should cater for the low skills development of the poor, dearth or poor basic economic infrastructure, lack of social capital and absence of financial institutions in these rural communities. Even where these institutions are available, accessibility is hindered. According to Dinye

(2006), micro-finance and poverty reduction are intricately related. Micro-finance has the potential of linking the formal banking system with the rural poor through savings mobilization and promotion of entrepreneurship endeavours.

Poverty alleviation programmes, in relation to the rural poor and job creation, acknowledge the transformation of the rural economic situation through the provision of micro-credit facilities that promote agro-based industrialization and increased productivity, especially in non - farm business ventures. This supports productivity increase and income generation.

The preceding paragraphs explored, in part, the principles, strategies and benefits of a sound poverty alleviation project for a resounding regenerative economy that will mitigate the effects of socio-structural pressures on the people. Governments in Nigeria have instituted poverty alleviation schemes and programmes such as "Better Life for Rural Women", "School - to - Land", The Directorate of Employment, Waste to Wealth programmes, etc. Ghana has, among others, the "Poverty Alleviation Fund", "Women Development Fund Micro-Finance Programme", Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) fund and Emergency Social Relief Project (ESRF) (Republic of Ghana 2002). The establishment and operations of these schemes and programmes over the years generate certain questions: Have these schemes and projects accomplished the objectives for which they were set up? Has there been an evaluation of the nature and performance achievement of the poverty alleviation programmes with a view to under-scoring their relevance to developing and re-directing the skills of the rural poor? What effects have they had against the structural societal pressures on goal attainment? Are there analyses of the challenges that constrain or enhance the opportunities of the livelihoods development of the affected citizens? Answers to these questions will definitely inform policy and implementation and for necessary orientation, adjustments and actions.

These questions are germane when considered against the objectives, functions and operations of the poverty alleviation schemes. In a competitive open society that is characterized by pressures for achievement and goal attainment, it becomes irrelevant for any alleviation programme like the National Directorate of Employment in Nigeria that recruited graduates

of all kinds, paid them ten thousand naira (₦10,000.00) monthly for sweeping the streets to be sustainable. How regenerative is such a venture? Better Life for Rural Women scheme ended up being hijacked by urban women with the assistance of wives of state governors and women politicians. The reason was that the state governors used the scheme to carve a niche for their wives to enrich themselves. Micro-credit financing and rural banking died a natural death as a result of stringent conditions and collaterals that were beyond the reach of the targeted populace. In most cases, political office holders, like in the immediate past administration in Nigeria, used credit facilities to enlist party affiliations and patronage. Ghana's project succeeded to an extent in providing loans services to poor rural micro-enterprises. Yet the issue of capacity building was neglected (Republic of Ghana 2002; Dinye 2006). The consideration therefore, is to explore ways of ensuring that the inter-relationships between socio-structural pressures and the challenges of survival do not always lead to crime committal.

Socio-structural pressures, where articulated, are supposed to be positive correlates and energizing forces for attitudinal change, capacity building, national integration and development. The relationship is such that there must always be pressures for exploring sources of livelihood, development and survival. As an independent variable, socio-structural pressures ought to re-direct and act as enforcer to the realization and adherence to normatively approved behaviours. They are drives for accomplishments through the reward systems. Even amongst citizens infested with the virus of materialism, sustainability in the environment should be both a springboard and a guiding platform. However, these are feasible in an open competitive society that proportionately emphasizes the realization of cultural goals through the normatively approved means. It throws open opportunities to all who desire them. It should not be coercive but rather take the stance of passion and always encourage the citizens.

ENSURING AN ENCOURAGING STRUCTURE FOR THE CHALLENGES OF SURVIVAL PRESSURES

This section explores some strategic policy implementations that will neutralize the challenges of societal pressures and encourage drives towards regenerative socio-economic engage-ments for sustainable survival of citizens. Africans need re-doubled efforts in their quest for capacity building and economic development. It will be deadly if the predictions of World Bank on the inability of Third World countries, parti-cularly Africa, to achieve the Millennium Develop-ment Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015 come true. This will submerge their economy and make nonsense of the little reform efforts of some governments to meet the targets. It is in this regard that the following prospective suggestions are made.

Strengthening the Role of the State: The efforts of some states in Africa at reform policies for regenerative economy should be stepped up. African leaders need not be reminded of the need to ardently pursue the constitutional roles of the state, adhere to the rule of law and ensure con-ducive environment that presents equal oppor-tunities for a greater majority. Through scientific articulation of policies of state agencies, private interests should be translated into public policies. While doing this, African states should realize the exigencies of global economic demands on capacity building and integrative market economy. Capacity building and skills development, with requisite infrastructures and access to productive assets, encourage economic regeneration and attenuation of pressures. These therefore reduce criminal tendencies.

Integrating Rural Economy with Global Markets: Economic reforms aim at productivity. The articulation of the internal and external forces necessitating the reforms should not underscore the need to integrate rural sector economy with global market economy. Rural sector economy is always a building block and supporter of macro-economic development. It encourages wealth creation and reduces social pressures. Implicitly, it creates opportunities for all.

Institutional Support for Rural Micro-financing: African governments and Nigeria in particular, should shift emphasis towards institutionalizing structures and programmes to support rural micro-financing. The preponderance of rural poor that are engaged in the rural sector economy demands favourable attention in this regard. The rural micro financing provides loans and savings services for micro-businesses and entrepreneurship. This will engage a greater majority of the rural poor, assist in poverty alleviation and attenuate the incidences of structural pressures.

Decongesting the Urban Population: A greater emphasis should be on decongesting the urban population towards the rural areas. This is only feasible with the creation of satellite towns with the required infrastructures to support entrepreneurship and establishment of micro businesses. Infrastructures in the existing urban areas are for now overstretched. Creation of the satellites offers opportunities for job creation and participatory governance. It affords opportunities for a greater majority to express themselves and engage in meaningful economic ventures that mitigate the effects of societal pressures.

Curtailing the Incidence of Culture of Materialism: Material acquisition is an underdevelopment factor where it is inordinately pursued at the expense of the economy. Where it is a force behind ineptitude, inefficiency in government processes, crime committal among individuals, groups and institutions, the culture has to be addressed and reformed. Positively, culture of materialism ought to be an energizing force for healthy competition for entrepreneurship in an open society. Socio-psychologically, it is a catalyst for an achievement motive, economic exploration, national integration and development. It is therefore, recommended that for the culture of materialism to be attenuated and employed as a development factor, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should aggressively pursue the institutionalization of sustainable and regenerative poverty alleviation programmes. The programmes will have multiplier effects towards wealth creation. They should be devoid of exclusionism and party patronage.

Aggressive Moral and Attitudnal Change: Transparency International has consistently focused its searchlight on Third World countries, especially Nigeria. The comments on corruption in Nigeria are not palatable for economic development. Aggressive pursuit of moral rejuvenation and attitudinal change should start with public (elected) officers. Laws against corruption should be enforced without discrimination. Blatant indulgence in corrupt practices endangers economic progress and instigates counter forces against perceived enemies. The pursuit of sound moral rectitude, justice and equity is a sure way of instituting egalitarianism, patriotism and allegiance to the leadership. This eventually demoralizes tendencies for criminal acts and sabotage.

CONCLUSION

The interactive nature of the relationship between structural pressures and crime committal by people, in their attempt to eke out a living, formed the thesis of this discussion. The enormity of the effects on livelihood and nation building has been stressed. Suggestions were made on ways to mitigate these pressures. It is therefore recommended that the suggestions proffered be aggressively pursued to liberate the minds of the alienated who perceive their fate as structurally ordained.

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