

THE HUMAN FACTOR TO THE POVERTY QUESTION IN AFRICA

BY

IGWE, AUGUSTINE UCHECHUKWU, Ph.D

Abstract

Poverty has been a recurring problem in Africa, especially as from the last quarter of the twentieth Century. The international community has equally shown concern to the problem. For instance, following the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the international community in 2000, official development assistance (ODA) to sub-Saharan African countries continued to increase. Thus, it was estimated that by 2010, about twenty-five billion dollars (\$25 billion) worth of official development assistance would be allocated to Africa (UNECA, 2005). The principal aims, being to enable the continent solve its recurring poverty. However, despite these aid, the poverty trap continues to bedevil Africa. Against this backdrop, this paper examines the human factor to the problem of poverty in Africa. It argues that numerous political crises inherent in the region have continued to pauperize the African population. In the course of analysis, it was established that the political economy approach adopted by successive African political leaders from the mid 1970s till date has led to political upheavals in different sections of sub-Saharan Africa that instituted the poverty trap. The paper concludes by outlining some measures that could reduce poverty such as favorable socio-political environment and equitable distribution of resources to the populace. A major way to accomplish this would be the application of true democratic principles that would lead to the emergence of purposeful political leaders who would adopt proactive socio-economic policies that could favour the masses, thereby addressing the 'poverty trap' in the continent before the end of the 21st Century.

Introduction

In simple term, poverty denotes a state of being poor, of not having enough money to take care of basic needs such as food, clothing and

housing. However, in a more general usage, poverty implies the condition of having insufficient resources or income. From a wider perspective, poverty is lack of basic human needs