

Human Capital Development as a Tool for Sustainable Peace in Nigeria

Ibrahim Inuwa Balarabe

Abstract— In any economy, human capital development is necessary for attaining sustainable peace and development. Investment in human capital generates employment opportunity as it improves skills, capabilities and competencies of the worker and eradicates poverty. It also generates income leading to the improvement of living conditions. In order to investigate the link between human capital development and sustainable peace in the country, the paper reviews some existing materials. One of the findings of this paper is that human capital investment enhances the skills, knowledge, productivity and creativity of human stock through a process of human capital formation. It therefore concludes that government should improve investment in education and training of individuals so as to achieve peace and development in the society.

Index Terms—Human Capital Development, Peace, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

It is well recognized all over the world that peace and security of life and property are the primary conditions for progress and development of any society. The engine of growth and development is peace and unity, and the pace at which a country generates the process that leads to sustainable economic growth and development depends largely on the quantum, quality and diversity of its human resource endowment (Arase and Iwuofor, 2007).

In any economy, human capital development is a function of the quality of its educational system. In the process of economic growth, it is customary to attach more importance to the accumulation of physical capital. Now it is increasingly recognized that the growth and efficacy of tangible capital stock depend, to a large extent, on human capital formation which is the process of increasing knowledge, skills and capacities of the people (Jhingan, 2003).

Human capital investment has a multiplier effect which engenders long term economic growth and increase in the living standard. Thus, any country that desires to enhance and accelerate peace, unity and development processes must take human capital investment and execute it methodically and comprehensively.

II. Statement of the problem

In Nigeria today there is clear absence of peace. Violence is manifested in various dimensions like the armed bandits,

Manuscript received Sep 17, 2014

Ibrahim Inuwa Balarabe, Department of Economics and Management Science Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil, P.M.B. 3474, Kano-Nigeria

armed robbery, the menace of Boko Haram in some parts of north and the Niger-Delta militants in the south. Again, there is issue of kidnapping, raping and vandalising and looting of public properties. These forms of violence can be seen everywhere in this country.

The objective of this research is to bring to the attention of policymakers the prevalence of this violence in the country and to offer suggestions to tackle it by focusing on the impact of human capital investment on sustainable peace in Nigeria. To do this, the research will adopt secondary sources of data in gathering the relevant information such as journals, magazines, proceedings of conferences, academic research works, text books and findings from other scholars.

III. Literature review

This section elucidates on the repository of intellectual contributions by scholars and professionals to the issue of human capital development.

In this regard, Aigbokhan et al (2007) observes that of all the factors that unlock the forces of economic growth and development, a country's human resources are the most vital, for without it all other factors have to wait. Changes in the quality of workforce account for the rapid economic development that has taken place in the advanced countries than any other factor. The major capital stock of an industrially advanced country is not its physical equipment but the body of knowledge amassed from tested findings and discoveries of empirical science, and the capacity and training of its population to use this knowledge.

Human capital development enhances the potentials of persons thereby enlarging their capabilities, empowering and enabling them to participate actively in their own development. Accordingly, Ogujuba and Adeniyi (2005) describe human capital development as means to enhance the skills, knowledge, productivity and creativity of human stock through a process of human capital formation. For nations to participate meaningfully in the emerging world economic order they must improve their knowledge stock and learning capabilities as education and training become increasingly significant. Clearly, human capital is an all embracing and multidimensional concept that cannot be fully captured by mere definition. Therefore, in an attempt to synthesize the most popular concepts, Odimegwu (2004) expounds them as human resources bordering on knowledge, skills, attitude and motivation, human capacity and productivity arising from skill and knowledge acquired which are capable of enhancing competence in production process, and comparing and contrasting human capital with material and social well being of citizens, efficiency of institutions and systems as well as the quality of human development indices that can be assessed. The human capital status of a nation will directly influence and positively correlate with economic and social indicators such as gross domestic product, income per-capita, balance of

trade, life expectancy, literacy rate, level of industrialization and the quality of infrastructural provisions. It can also have great impact on political stability, national peace and harmony as well as the prevailing ethos (Odimegwu, 2005).

IV. Human Capital Development

Schultz (1961) saw human capital as those resources that are inherent in each human being, which can be traded between the users and the owners to improve their respective living conditions. He outlined these inherent resources in human being to include knowledge (knowing what to do), skills (knowing how to do what is to be done), and attitude (behavioural demonstration of a favourable inclination while doing that which is to be done). Aigbokhan et al (2007) regard education to be a basic process through which skills, knowledge and attitude are acquired for carrying out socio-economic responsibilities, social integration, improving personal competence, and seeking better opportunities. Igun (2006) defines human capital as 'the total stock of knowledge, skills, competencies, innovative abilities possessed by the population'. These are certainly driven by the quality of tertiary education acquired.

Human capital refers to the abilities and skills of human resources of a country. This suggests that human capital is a form of resources that can be acquired, built up and developed. In essence, the development of human capital is to ensure that they acquire meaningful and productive skills that enhance their capabilities to engage in productive activities that lead to earning of livelihood. Thus, human capital is defined as the development of human resources concerned with the two-fold objective of building skills and providing productive employment for non-utilized or under-utilized manpower. It is the knowledge, skills, attitudes, physical and managerial efforts required to manipulate capital, technology, land and material to produce goods and services for human consumption. Therefore, human capital impacts on productivity, employment, income generation and standard of living. By implication human capital development leads to improved capability and ultimately reduction in poverty.

A major Issue In the literature is the measurement or indices of human capital. Many researchers have argued that those factors that contribute to human development are the indices of human capital. In this regard, Schultz (1961) identified five ways of developing human resources:

1. Investment in health facilities and services; broadly conceived to include all expenditures that affect the life expectancy, strength and stamina and all vigor and vitality of the people.
2. On-the-job training, including old-typed apprenticeships organized by firms.
3. Formally organized education at the elementary, secondary and higher levels.
4. Study programmes for adults that are organized by firms, including extension
5. Migration of individuals and families to adjust to changing job opportunities.

From the above, two major indices of human capital can be identified - education/training and health. First, education is said to be the most crucial means of improving skills, capabilities and eradicating poverty. A high quality education is capable of offering a genuine solution to most economic problems including poverty. Education and training are

generally indicated as the most important direct means of upgrading the human intellect and skills for productive employment. However, it is worthy to note that not all forms of education can have meaningful effect on human capital. For education to contribute to human capital acquisition, such form of education must be capable of leading to skill improvement.

V. Peace

Like most concepts in social discourse, there is no universal definition of peace. However, peace has been generally defined as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence (David F.J., 2006). But this conception has been criticized by many scholars for being inadequate for understanding the meaning and nature of peace (Ibeanu, 2006). The Norwegian peace theorist, Johan Galtung distinguishes three types of violence that can help to understand the concept of peace namely:

1. Direct violence manifested by physical, emotional and psychological violence.
2. Structural violence which comes in the form of deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm.
3. Cultural violence which involves cultural norms and practices that creates discrimination, injustice and human suffering.

In addition, Galtung outlines two dimension of peace. The first is negative peace which is the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels. The second is positive peace which describes the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace at individual level. However, a more useful conceptualization of peace must therefore see beyond the narrow conception of absence of war, fear, anxiety, suffering and violence. This is why Prof. Okey Ibeanu defines peace as a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community (Ibeanu, 2006).

He points out that there are philosophical, sociological and political definitions of peace. Philosophically, peace is seen as a natural, original, God-given state of human existence.

Sociologically, peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonisms. Politically, peace entails political order that is institutionalization of political structures in a way that makes justice possible. As Ibeanu has argued, it would be wrong to classify a country experiencing pervasive structural violence as peaceful. In other words, although war may not be going on in a country where there is pervasive poverty, oppression of the poor by the rich, police brutality, intimidation of ordinary people by those in power, oppression of women, or monopolization of resources and power by some sections of the society, it will still be wrong to say that there is peace in such a country.

VI. Factors for Sustainable Peace

As noted above, for development to take place in any society there must be need of sustainable peace. Scholars are in agreement that for there to be sustainable peace, society must evolve ways of addressing the root causes of conflicts by helping to foster participatory democracy, just and accountable governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and a balance and equitable distribution of resources,

among a host of others- all issues the neglect of which often results in instability within states (Chambers, 2004). The critical factors for sustainable peace in any society are:

- A. Justice
- B. Just and accountable governance
- C. Protection of human rights
- D. Equitable distribution of resources
- E. Peace and security education

The absence of any or all of the above factors will lead to violence and absence of sustainable peace. Therefore, in Nigeria we can say that there is clear absence of sustainable peace. Violence is manifested in various dimensions. There is physical violence manifested in the brutality of the security agencies on citizens (the military, police, civil defence and vigilante). There is physical violence by armed bandits, armed robbers and the menace of Boko Haram in some parts of north and the Niger-Delta militants at south. There is physical and psychological violence by kidnappers. There is physical, sexual and psychological violence by rapists. There is structural violence in a lot of policies that give privilege to the rich. The political system, nomination of candidates, nomination fees and electoral expenses is structural violence against the poor. Privatization policies that sell public wealth to few individuals are structural violence to those citizens who have no money to buy. The deliberate policy of promoting private primary, secondary and tertiary schools to the detriment of public schools is structural violence to the poor who cannot afford the exorbitant fees of private schools. Allocation of oil block to people in position of authority is economic violence. Looting of public treasury is economic violence. Re-writing history of past regimes noted for institutionalizing corruption in a bid to rule again is psychological and emotional violence to the people. At the moment, these are the key problems that are capable of compromising the peace and security of Nigeria.

VII. Effect of human capital investment

The economic rationale for investing in human capital derives from the belief that human capital plays a key role in economic growth. The investment especially in education contributes significantly to peace and development. It improves human characteristics or human capital variables; variables here include knowledge, skills and attitude. As explained by Shultz (1961), human capital investment improves living conditions of human beings since it brings about trade between the owners and the users. Owners here refer to employees who have the knowledge (knowing what to do), the skills (knowing how to do what is to be done) and the attitude (behavioural demonstration of a favourable inclination while doing that which is to be done). Users refer to employers who need labour services. However, when individuals have acquired skills, knowledge and competency, the employment opportunity is opened to them. It is also observed that human capital investment provides employment opportunity as it is concerned with the two-fold objective of building skills and providing productive employment for non-utilized or under-utilized manpower. In addition, when individuals have become employable because of the skills and knowledge they acquired, they tend to be peaceful and no one would think of attacking another. In other words, sustainable peace and unity will prevail in the society. Therefore, in line with the above, it can be established that human capital investment has effect on the:-

- ~ Equipping individuals with necessary skills and knowledge.
- ~ Provision of employment.
- ~ Sustaining peace and unity.

Conclusion and recommendations

The research has tried to show the significance of human capital development as it can be used in sustainable peace and development. It has employed secondary sources of data in gathering the relevant information such as journals, magazines, text books and findings from other scholars. Since peace and development have been the major objectives of government in every country, the research recommends that government should improve investment in educating and training the people which will increase the number of skilled, capable and experienced persons and to provide incentives to the economically active poor who are either unemployed or underemployed. The peace and security education should also be a critical factor in government agenda to create the enabling environment, people, organization and the action needed to bring about sustainable peace and development in the country. Government should also improve necessary facilities such as electricity, water, roads, security, credit facilities, etc to ginger the economic activities in the country since there are many empirical evidences showing a high positive relationship between a rise in educational expansion and health care delivery and economic development as shown by Adeniyi, 2005. This will reduce chances of our youths being recruited into different forms of social vices in the society.

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