

INVESTIGATING THE CAUSAL FACTORS OF LOW DEVELOPMENT IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

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ABSTRACT

An assessment of the development stage of the countries of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) is here made, with a view to exposing possible minifying factors. It's imperative is borne out of the desire to clinically investigate the factors that stagnates development in the sub-region. The region's slow pace of development is by no means a mere happenstance. It is presumably orchestrated either by nature, man or both. In effect, poverty of the social and economic infrastructure in the region is endemic to a point of disaster, and is imminently the crux of the matter. The paper examines therefore, the tardy nature of the development process in these countries as to establish the cause factors and their effect. Analysis of some secondary data sources would enhance the lucidity of the impact on development, of the subsisting man-made and ecological issues in the LCB region. While official negligence, corruption, conflict and ecological issues are identified as causal agents, viable remedy to the problems as recommended, takes the form of improved governance through innovative and prudent resource management, value creation and provision of strong social protection programme for the peoples of the area.

Keywords: LCB, development, infrastructure, Sahel, natural resources, corruption

1. INTRODUCTION

Over time, growth and development process in the economic zone of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), like elsewhere in Africa, is close to being described as unprogressive and stagnant. The slow pace of the process has indeed become a source of worry, considering the massive resources and opportunities available to member countries. While it would be proper to say

that the LCB countries are not equally endowed, it is safe also to say that in each country, the level of development is not commensurate with the existing human and natural endowments. Thus the over thirty million people living within the LCB are bequitted with nothing but destitution, unemployment, misery and hunger. This also takes toll on the stability and political development of the zone.

Notwithstanding the imperative to thoroughly make investigation as to why this situation abound, certain factors visibly prop themselves up. To be closely scrutinized hence, is the impact of such issues as crime, conflict, corruption and bad governance as well as ecological issues such as desertification, deforestation and the shrinking water body of the LCB. The article therefore examines the extent to which these factors have plagued the possibility of improving human and infrastructure development among the countries bordering the Lake Chad Basin. And where the diminishing development effect is traced to the above listed factors, the paper proposes a number of recommendations as a standard to mitigate the trend.

2. CONCEPTUAL POINT OF DEPARTURE

Issues concerned with the conceptualization of development can be located as occupying the front burner with regards to its shortage. This is evident from the point of view that conventional definition and practice of development has not brought about the push required for the change desired. Instead it has become in the views of Trainer (2000), a situation in which despite enormous amount of “development”, serious development problems not only remain but are getting worse.

Conventional approach sees development from a linear point of view, involving according to Markins et al (1992) the process of growing or developing, including coming to an advanced or expanded stage. This definition agrees with the assumption of the development school of thought, which emphasizes that poor nations could be advanced or accelerated along the supposed common path of development via supra-territorial integration of goods, services and capital. Therefore, this presupposes that once an economy experiences increase in output, GDP, and its overall net macro-economic index, then development has taken place (Omoweh, 2000; Erunke and Lemun, 2012).

The above assumption presents a paradoxical situation, for instance, in Nigeria as in few other African countries, “despite the fact that the economy is growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year...” (NBS, 2010). Indeed economic growth for a country is not the same as development. An antithesis to the conventional approach however, posits that increase in growth and development in real terms should be able to translate to an enhanced living standard for the people. In other words, development is better conceptualized if it takes care of questions bordering on poverty, rising inequitable distribution of income, unemployment and environmental disaster (Erunke and Usman, 2009). It is in this connection that Rodney (1972) considers development at the individual level to imply increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.

The realization of the people-centered model depends on the state of the society as a whole, bearing in mind the economic, social, political and human development dimensions. Therefore, a humanistic perspective will align development to empowerment, observing it as the right of local people to be in charge of their lives, express their own desires and initiate solution to their problems (Emecheta, 2013). This perspective also emphasizes the need, which improved infrastructure serves in advancing the welfare of the people.

The article therefore considers development administration approach as basis to analyze the impediments associated with human and infrastructure development in the LCB. Bearing in mind the administrative ecology of the zone, the model supports a result oriented innovative change through a well integrated planning. It is about projects, programmes, policies and ideas focused toward the development of a nation, with the point of view of achieving socio-economic and political development of the society through skilled government agents (MSG, 2013). Regrettably, the problem of unresponsiveness and rent seeking among government officials has created a condition that spirals into greater problem of poverty, shortage of facilities and environmental degradation.

Human development model is also relevant in providing theoretical background that would permit proper understanding of the basic premise of the subject matter. This model, which encapsulates the ideas of sustainable development, ecology, welfare economics and feminism is seen as the process of enlarging people’s choices, as to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated, to enjoy a decent standard of living, as well as political freedom, and other

guaranteed human rights and various ingredients of self-respect (UNDP, 1997; Streeten, 1994). The possibility and importance of accomplishing the above ideals lies in developing the capabilities of the human person. This suggests that by investing in people, we enable growth and empower people to pursue many different life paths and ambition, which also enhance human capabilities (see Sen, 2004; Sen, 2012; UNDP, 2009).

A closer look at the conditions in the LCB countries reveals an unfortunate situation. In reality, the level of poverty among the people is relatively large and reflects low values of human development. It consequently depicts deprivation in the three indexes of human development: long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living (Fosu, 2007). This analysis thus presents the governments of the LCB countries in the light of superintending over a system that is unable to cater for the welfare of the people.

3. LCB COUNTRIES AND ECONOMY: AN OVERVIEW

The Lake Chad Basin (LCB) spans through the West, Central and North Africa. It is shared by Nigeria in the south-west of the Chad Basin with a share area of 179,000 km². The western part covering 674,000 km² is in Niger, while Chad is at the center, and occupies the largest portion of 1,123,000 km² of the basin. In the southwest of the basin also is Cameroon with an area of 47,400 km², and the southern part covering 216,000 km² is in the territory of the Central African Republic (CAR). Again in the north and northwest, 91,000 km² and 5,100 km² are in Algeria and Libya respectively, while Sudan is in the eastern part of the basin covering an area of 97, 900 km² (LCBC, 2012).

In afore listed countries, the predominant economic activities among the local populace include farming, herding and fishing (FAO, 1997), with artisans making up a small percentage. About 40% of the entire populations engaged in these trades are poor rural dwellers whose practices are in small and subsistent level. In ranking though, all the eight are poor and developing countries with a variety of habitats, out of which according to the LCBC (2012b), about half of the basin area (north) is made up of desert, and of course arid Savannah in the belt of the Sahel zone. They are also characterized by undiversified economies that are dependent on primary export products.

However, while some of these countries are grouped as the world's least developed countries with low income, Nigeria, Libya and Algeria can particularly be classified as middle and

semi-middle income countries. Chad, Central African Republic (CAR) and Niger are landlocked, with arable land areas of 3.82%, 2.89% and 11.79% of their total area respectively (CIA, 2014). The distance of these landlocked countries from the nearest seacoast is in excess of about 2,000 km. This creates the problem of contiguity, and imposes the constraint of isolation from world markets with high cost of transportation of goods (UN-OHRLLS, 2013).

On the other hand, Nigeria, Libya, Cameroon, Sudan and Algeria have varied distance of coastal access, with arable land areas of 38.97%, 0.99%, 13.04%, 6.76%, 3.15% respectively (CIA, 2014b). Indeed the reality of arable lands falling below 4.0% in most of these countries also is paradoxical for the mere fact that over 40% of their rural population is engaged in farming. This therefore exposes the shortages and difficulty associated with acquiring both farming and grazing lands, since there is also the menace of massive dryness and desertification of the zone. All these point to the possibility of the poor, remaining in poverty.

These countries, nonetheless, are well endowed though unequally, as it is obvious in the following data;

- Nigeria: Natural Resources – natural gas, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, arable land. Population – 177,155,754 (July 2014 est)
- Libya: Natural Resources -petroleum, natural gas, gypsum. Population– 6,244,174 (July 2014 est)
- Algeria: Natural Resources – petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, uranium, lead, zinc. Population – 38,813,722 (July 2014 est)
- Cameroon: Natural Resources – petroleum, bauxite, iron ore, timber, hydropower, arable land. Population – 23,130,708 (July 2014 est)
- Sudan: Natural Resources – petroleum, small reserves of iron ore, copper, chromium ore, zinc, silver, gold, tungsten, mica, hydropower. Population – 35,482,233 (July 2014 est)
- Niger: Natural Resources – uranium, coal, gold, iron ore, petroleum, phosphates, molybdenum, gypsum, salt. Population – 17,466,172 (July 2014 est)
- Chad: Natural Resources – petroleum, uranium, natron, kaoline, fish (Lake Chad), gold, limestone, sand and gravel, salt. Population – 11,412,107 (July 2014 est)

- C.A.R: Natural Resources – diamond, uranium, timber, gold, oil, hydropower.

Population – 5,277,959 (July 2014 est)

(Source: CIA World Factbook, 2014c).

The critical question that would permit an understanding of the economic situation of these countries is, “why is human and infrastructure development still at the lowest ebb in the zone, given the recorded level of endowment, and the amount of Aid extended to it annually”? Attempt at capturing a reasonable answer to the question would essentially form the basis of our subsequent inquiry.

4. THE PROBLEM: DEPRECIATING DEVELOPMENT IN LCB

Consideration was in the preceding chapter, given to development administration as a model to bring to prominence, the place of personnel and institutions of the state in the development discourse. In fact the polemical relationship between poverty and underdevelopment, and the role of the officials of the state should suffice to engender the desired course of action. What this means is that government of a state on one hand, must assiduously put to use the apparatus of the state and its endowment in a quest to uplift the stage of human and infrastructure development. Alternatively, the citizens so uplifted should count, and work toward a higher stage of development of the country. Unfortunately, this has not been applicable in the LCB countries irrespective of their level of natural endowment and population. Thus low level of human and infrastructure development persist in the zone.

4.1. Infrastructure deficit

Infrastructure is a major *launching vehicle* of growth in any society, and plays a greater role in realizing a country’s development targets. In the LCB countries, as in other low income African countries, the level of infrastructure is a significant constraint to business, and is found to depress firm productivity by 40 percent or more. As such the negative impact of deficient infrastructure is at least, as large as that associated with corruption, crime, financial market and red tape constraints (World Bank FactSheet, 2013).

In the countries of the Lake Chad Basin, almost all facets of the economy are underdeveloped. And the major deficit is in the areas of power, transportation, water resources, information and communication technology, etc. It is this consideration that prompted the declaration at the Washington Conference of the Council on Africa that, “Africa’s infrastructure needs are

indeed daunting” (World Bank, 2008). It was particularly emphasized that the deficit is nowhere more prevalent than in the power sector, which is considered an important growth engine. Obviously, this is a general phenomenon because about 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa with a total population of about 600 million people had a combined power generation capacity no more than that of Argentina alone (World Bank, 2008b). In the same vein, records from the world factbook of the CIA (2014d) show that the eight LCB countries with a population of over 314 million people have only an installed power generating capacity of about 26,499 Megawatts.

The inadequacy experienced in power generation, transmission and distribution capacity of these countries is also found to prevail in the transport sector. The pathetic situation in these economic sectors arises as a result of apparent lack of sustained investment and maintenance in them. As a result, infrastructure in the LCB zone, in the areas of road network (highway and arterial), bridges and railway is sparse and deplorable.

Until recently, the Nigerian railway built by the British government was according to Adejumo (2006) left in its state, an archaic and museum piece to say the least, with virtually no effort on the part of successive regimes to upgrade, improve and maintain it. While the story is the same in other LCB states, some in absolute terms, experience lack of rail lines, locomotives, dredged inland waterways, airports and other transport infrastructure. The Central African Republic for example, is in this category with only 429 km of paved road, no rail road and no domestic air services. Consequently, transit time for goods of these countries especially the landlocked ones, become extremely long because of long distance, difficult terrain, road and railway conditions etc (UN-OHRLLS, 2013b).

The zone is endowed with enormous water resources, and hydropower (in Sudan, CAR, and Cameroon). Yet these resources nature avails seem *to be of no salt* to the problems of portable water supply, irrigation and electricity generation. This is because funds meant for development are not being committed toward the building up of infrastructure, which also is the case in the information and communications sector.

Counting on the unique opportunity to connect and assist those living in the poorest and most isolated regions of the world with information technology (Annan, 2002), a lot could actually

be achieved. Unfortunately, that opportunity has not yet been widely accessed. The prevailing situation in the LCB zone indeed betrays this, as well as the submission that "Africa should build by the year 2010, an information society, in which people, village, government office and business can secure access to the use of ICT" (AISI Document, 2005). Today, it is more serious owing to the poor conditions of fixed-line infrastructure, limited Fibre-to-the-Premise (FttP) infrastructure and erratic electricity supply etc. The issue here is indeed that of low investment. Invariably, both 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure necessary for the proper functioning of the state, maintenance of economic growth and socio-cultural standards of the people, are *ad nauseam*, in short supply.

4.2. Human development deficiency

Countries of the Lake Chad Basin are among the world's least developed economies. Some are ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI), calculated on the basis of long and healthy life, education index and decent standard of living (UNDP, 2010). The indices are presented in a way that if it is low, it can be used to highlight national insufficiency in both economic policy framework, and quality of life and social welfare (see Davis and Quinlivan, 2006). In sub-Saharan Africa, half of the population ie, about 380 million people are poor. This number lives on under \$1.25 a day and lack access to basic amenities (World Bank, 2008; Banerjee and Duflo, 2006). The bulk of the population of the LCB countries that make up this statistics, are 'dwellers' in rural and isolated areas. These include small scale farmers, artisanal fishers, nomadic herdsman, wage labourers, displaced people, unemployed women and youths, etc. In the isolated zones where these poor people reside, they lack necessary infrastructure and social protection and safety nets initiated to ameliorate poverty.

Analysis on the index of long and healthy life of the people of the LCB is a matter of sad tales. Health issues ranging from HIV, Malaria, Polio, maternal and infant mortality, to Onchocerciasis (Riverblindness), etc, are so endemic in the zone, and result to the high mortality rate experience. More so, impaired health according to Hamoudi and Sachs (1999) exacerbates poverty and undermines development, either directly or indirectly by lowering growth. "Malnutrition, and micronutrient deficiency is also a problem among the people of the zone" (Muller and Krawinkel, 2005).

Literacy level in the LCB is also quite low and therefore poses great concern. It is perhaps so because in the zone, education is not treated as part of the basic rights of the citizens. This is contrary to the fact that human development and human rights are mutually reinforcing, helping to secure the well-being and dignity of all people, building self-respect and the respect of others (UNDP, 2009b). In the circumstance, nothing is left of Sen’s capability thesis, cited in the preceding chapter, if for a telling illustration; we have only an estimated literacy level of 35.4%, 28.7%, and 56.6% of people between 15 years and above respectively in Chad, Niger and CAR? What about the situation in Nigeria where the literacy level is only slightly above half of the population, and leaving in its trail, the problems of “Almajiri” in the north and the “areaboys” syndrome in the southwest?

UNESCO Country Profile provides a clue of the situation through its Out-of-School-Children yearly report presented as follows;

- *Table 1*

COUNTRY	2011	2012
CHAD	770,441	NA
NIGERIA	NA	10m est.
NIGER	1,053,836	1,048,707
CAR	212,206	193,652
ALGERIA	26,869	25,337
CAMEROON	NA	294,813
SUDAN	2,810,907	NA

- Source: <www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/pages/regions.aspx>

The above, presented as proportion of each country’s population, paints a gloomy picture of the future of literacy in the zone. The low level of access to education only means that the people of the sub-region lack the requisite human capabilities, which is fundamental to enlarging people’s choices and increasing their value of life.

Consequently, achieving a decent living standard in the LCB zone has over the years become a mirage. The infrastructure needs of the people are far from being met. And the possibility of reducing poverty and hunger, which according to Tortora (2009) is ranked as the two most important goals of the MDGs, is also in the same stead. Therefore the result of current analysis of issues of infrastructure and human welfare in the LCB, paints a disturbing picture of the existing decadence in the midst of great endowment.

5. CAUSE FACTOR: MAN-MADE AND NATURAL

There are several identifiable ways through which man's activities and nature have played resistive roles to development in the LCB sub-region. Through poor official service and governance, crime, corruption and conflict, the problem of societal development has been made multiple. One can also say that man and nature share a symbiotic relationship, and affect each other, and whether negatively or positively, the effect trickles down to the development process. A textbook example of their relationship is the human (anthropogenic) induced climate change, through activities ranging from deforestation, poor environmental management (waste disposal), to burning of fossil fuels. These in turn, intensify the natural greenhouse effect, resulting to increase in the average temperature of the Earth's surface, otherwise referred to as global warming (Claussen, et al, 2001; AAS, 2006). This adversely affects man's health, natural habitat and bio-diversity. Therefore it is only needful to separately consider these factors as to appreciate the extent of their influence on the development efforts of the LCB countries.

5.1. Governance issues, corruption and conflict

From the point of view of problems associated with governance, issues of attenuated development in the LCB sub-region can be properly put into perspective. Governments of the listed LCB states are not oriented toward the collective good of the people. Instead, governance for officials is all about reveling in the glory of their offices and the attendant advantages *simpliciter*. More debilitating in it, is that the policies of the governments of these countries are not people oriented. In the opinion of Erunke and Lemun (2012b), "the various economic designs and prognosis in these states are indeed structurally banal, blank and proffers little or no solution to actual social problems of poverty reduction, disease control, war, crime and other vices". Thus, problems such as dereliction of official duties and unresponsiveness, 'policy somersault', poor policy implementation, etc, are the bane of

sustainable development in these countries. While the jollity goes on in government departments, the people suffer deprivation of their social and infrastructure needs.

Worse than failure to apply innovation and effectiveness by governments of the LCB states, is the case of official corruption. Although there may be no definitive figures on the extent of the damage caused by corruption, but we know that it hinders a county's development in more ways than one. It reduces growth, scares away foreign investment and channels sorely needed loans and aid funds into projects that are of little benefit to the people, but which carry great returns for corrupt decision makers (Cote-Freeman, 1999).

In 2013, a joint IMF/World Bank mission to the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), declared that high level of corruption have left the populations of Chad, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea etc, out of the benefits of their nation's huge petroleum resources (VOA News Report, 2013). Significantly, corruption has infiltrated the system that when official decisions are made, they are remotely influenced by motives other than economic development and human welfare. This is perhaps why Mauro (1997) insisted that "corruption tempts government officials to choose government expenditures less on the basis of public welfare than on the opportunity they provide for extorting bribes". Large projects like the Ajeokuta Steel factory in Kogi State Nigeria, whose exact value is difficult to monitor, presents lucrative opportunities for officials to continue *to be on the take*. It is also due to mention millions of barrels of oil being stolen from the shores of Nigeria on daily basis.

The following figures in the table below represent the scores and ranks of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) countries in the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), worked out by Transparency International.

• *Table 2*

Country	Score	Rank
Algeria	36	100
Niger	35	103
Nigeria	27	136

Cameroon	27	136
CAR	24	150
Chad	22	154
Libya	18	166
Sudan	11	173

- Source: Transparency International, 2014

The above data is based on corruption survey in the public sector. A country's score indicates the perceived level of corruption in the public sector, on a scale of 0-100, where 0 means a perception of high corruption and 100 means a country is perceived as least corrupt. Out of a survey of 175 countries in 2014, the result shows that sub-Saharan Africa, to which the LCB countries belong are perceived to be the most corrupt region. This is because these countries are the least in score and alternatively rank the highest in the CPI Report.

The situation in the LCB zone presents itself as a pointer to the “resource curse” concept. The paradox of poverty and hunger in the midst of plenty is another way to express or describe “resource curse”. The economy of most countries of the LCB are dependent on natural resource export including, oil, gas, diamond, uranium, gold, etc. Export cash from these resources, rather than engender economic growth, often ends up in the pockets of corrupt leaders while majority of the people are deprived of the wealth (see Auty, 1993). In concrete terms, Auty associated the “resource curse” phenomenon with the poor performance of resource-rich countries, when compared with the resource-poor ones on issues of human development, governance and economic growth. Countries that survived it such as Norway and Botswana made sure to plough back their earnings into public fund that provided for public investments.

Over dependence in natural resources can also result to what is termed as the “Dutch Disease” – a variant of “resource curse”. This is an economic phenomenon, in which revenue from natural resource exports damage a nation's productive economic sectors by causing real exchange rate and wage increase. The recession which this caused in the Netherlands (after the discovery of a large natural gas field in 1959) is today being witnessed in the LCB countries (O'neil, 2004). The “Dutch disease” kills the spirit of economic diversification as is

evident in the eight countries under review, whose manufacturing sector are comatose. Of all their mineral deposits, Nigeria, Libya, Cameroon, Algeria, Sudan and Chad developed and depended mostly on petroleum and natural gas production and export. CAR on the other hand, depends on the export of diamond and Niger on uranium. Owing to the damage in the productive sector of these economies, the prospect of development in human and infrastructure becomes highly hampered.

The specificity of the views of Gray and Kaufmann (1998), that natural resources can provoke armed conflicts in the regions where the resources are located cannot be missed. An instance to it is that oil production in the Niger Delta (Nigeria) instead of brewing harmony and contentment in the region, brought frustration and a complex multi-level conflict, which of course brought about an unprecedented violence of the most destructive nature (Imobighe, 2004). This was further reminisced on, in a review of Ibiba DonPedro's book; *Oil in the water: Crude power and militancy in the Niger Delta*. There, Obi (2007) captures the emotive disposition of the book about the contradictions and sharp inequalities that brought about a spiralling poverty, violence and destruction in the oil-rich, but impoverished region. The same is happening in Chad, CAR, and in Libya where the post 2011 revolution crisis is dragging the country to the precipice; all with catastrophic effect on development, since there can be none without peace and stability. Indeed conflict by whatever shape, motive or colour, consumes a lot of resources, destroys existing infrastructure and shifts government's attention away from development programmes. In almost all the LCB countries, conflict and crime substantially reign, and that cannot be unconnected with the manifest discontentment, as said, among the people of the zone, especially the youths. This scares away investors and impedes economic growth and development.

Available data shows that the February 17th Libyan Revolution was a direct protest against a repressive Qaddafi regime. It saw to the mobilization of 236 revolutionary brigades (*Kata'ib* in local parlance), made up of nearly 40,000 registered members. In all, the goal of the revolution was not simply to depose a regime, but rather to establish a nation with prudent and accountable leadership that would bring about economic development, and individual freedom (McQuinn, 2012). On the other hand, the terrorism that currently reigns in the Sahel region especially in Chad and Niger, is resource-induced and is perceived as an off-shoot of the Sudan crisis. In this regard, the ICG report (2013) declared that the 23 May 2013, twin

suicide attacks targeting the Agadez army barracks and an Areva mining site in Arlit, and the June 1st violent prison break in Niamey, cast a shadow over Niger's stability. This is a pointer to the democratic deficit and growing marginalization of poor, rural societies.

The story is not quite different in Chad, as ICG (2009) also reports that since 2003, when oil exploration began, its export has contributed greatly to the deterioration of governance and to a succession of rebellions and political crisis. The financial windfall in 2007, (53 million barrels earning the government \$1.2 billion) has increased corruption, stoked domestic dissent and led to rebellions supported by neighboring Sudan. Extreme poverty and armed conflict in the diamond-rich areas of the Central African Republic, all the same, put thousands of lives in danger. Profit from the diamond mines have never reached the vast majority of the population, instead high export taxes that end up in the pockets of government officials, encourage a black market, which allows rebel groups to fund their activities and recruit impoverished workers (ICG, 2010). Again, the absence of accountability and the absolute freedom toward resource misappropriation by the Sudanese leadership, has pitched them against the people. The fact here remains that unless the grievances of the regions of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Dafur, the East, etc, are addressed by a more inclusive and responsive government, Sudan runs the risk of more violence and disintegration (ICG, 2011).

In Nigeria also, apart from the crisis between the nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nasarawa and Benue states, and the raging Boko Haram insurgency, criminality is still the crux of the matter. In a report, IRIN (2006, cited in Emecheta and Onyejelem, 2012) quoted Nigerian security agencies as saying that remnants of rebel wars in Niger and Chad, operating in bands of 30 and 50 armed men, engage in banditry on highways in the northeast and central Nigeria. All these indicate a gradual erosion of the possibility of extending the boundaries of development in the sub-region.

5.2. Nature and ecology

In the Lake Chad Basin, natural and ecological issues have been identified as constituent factors to the challenges of development; both human and infrastructure. This was the scenario that facilitated the resurgence of interest among the six member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), made up of Nigeria, Chad, Niger, CAR, Cameroon and Libya, to revitalize the shrinking Lake Chad Basin. The Basin, which hitherto covered an area

of about 25,000 km² in 1964, has presently reduced to only about 1,500 sq. kilometers, thus, accentuating the loss of means of livelihood of the people of the area, in fishing, farming and other socio-economic activities (see ALLAfrica, 2014). A reminder that the majority of rural people of the zone are engaged in these means of livelihood will boost an understanding of how important the wholesome existence of the basin is to people's welfare and development.

Inimical to agricultural development and other forms of human welfare also, is the climatic and ecological realities of the zone in the northern area. About half of the basin area in the north, is occupied by the Tenere Desert, Erg du Bilma and Erg du Djourab. The belt of the Sahel-zone, south of the desert is home to dry, thorny shrub filled Savannah. There are also frequent cases of drought as the *monsoon rainfall* decreases from the south to the north – making up a statistic level of less than 100 mm of rainfall in the north of Chad, Niger, Libya and Algeria – to 1,500 mm per year in the south of the basin. The resultant effect is recurrent encroachment of the desert, which evolved from 66 to 77% of its size (LCBC, 2014).

6. THE SOLUTION: INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISCIPLINE

Possible proposals to bring about solution to the problem of development in the LCB must recognize the need for a sustainable investment in critical infrastructure across sectors that reinforce each other's impact. All efforts in this direction must be rooted in viable development plans that would enhance productivity through the application of new technologies.

Reform geared toward elevating the practice of accountability would be necessary, including the act of monitoring to ensure compliance. Stronger transparency in the extractive industry sector, and application of the Norwegian formula, will ensure the expunction of the “resource curse” phenomenon in the states of the LCB. In the views of Lawson-Remer and Greenstein (2012), the private sector especially NGOs and other agencies should support programmes to educate citizens in auditing, accounting and tracking of revenues and expenditure as to be able to hold public officials accountable. There is also the need to re-inforce the connection between legislation and development.

Fundamental still, is the need *to play the hard game* on corruption. Spirited fight against corruption is necessary because its effect in an economy is diverse and adversely affects

investment, economic growth and encourages “resource curse”. Analysis made by Mauro (1997b) is relevant with the position of the paper and the data presented. It posits that if a country improves its standing on the corruption index (remember that 0 is most corrupt, 100 is least), it will enjoy the benefits of an increase in the percentage points of investment, with consequent improvement in employment and economic growth. This is because there will be more liquidity at government’s disposal to invest in the people’s future.

In the LCB sub-region, crisis and instability has precluded governments to a large extent from implementing socio-economic transformation programmes. However, governments of LCB countries must facilitate stable socio-political environment through youth and gender empowerment, as to ensure macro economic stability, growth and development. This should be anchored on a well programmed entrepreneurial skills and craft training and acquisition, employment, economic opportunities in investment, access to infrastructure, finance and improved agricultural practices (Emecheta, 2013b). More access to formal education must be created for the people of the zone, through the provision of compulsory, free and/or affordable, regular, nomadic, and adult school enrolment. Through the above efforts, the youth would be gainfully and actively occupied, and would no longer be available according to Emecheta and Onyejelem (2012b) as willing tools, ever ready to be recruited for any nefarious activity. The import of this is that the more idle and un-empowered the youths are, the more poverty and hunger creep in, and the more incited they become against the system that pauperizes them. The need to provide social amenities therefore suffices and cannot be overemphasized, more so as relates to human welfare, implying a demand to favour programmes that would put food on the tables of these identified millions of poor people in the LCB zone.

On the aspect of the environment, it cannot be disregarded that great land portion of the countries of the LCB fall within the Sahel region. Sequel to this, the Great Green Wall project (GGW) adopted by the African Union (AU) as a model to wedge the pace of desertification affecting countries bordering the Sahara desert, needs practical commitment and attention. The intention, in the opinion of Abutu and Okeke (2014), to create eco-system restoration of dry lands, is envisaged to ensure a transcontinental greenbelt of 15 km wide and 7,775 km long from Senegal to Djibouti. To achieve maximum benefit, people must learn to deal favorably with their environment, avoiding deforestation, and embracing alternative sources

of clean energy. This has become necessary as global warming extends the boundaries of the Sahara desert through persistent land degradation of the dry Sahel region.

7. CONCLUSION

There is arguably no better way to measure a country's development level than through its human development index. It is, apart from anything else, a precondition for measurement since economic growth that has no recourse to the living condition of people is out of the development picture. While the provision of economic infrastructure and social amenities are grouped as growth engines, their availability in whichever sector, *ipso facto* signify human welfare.

This paper has therefore contended that sufficient political will must of need be mustered to make sustainable investment in both human and structural development of the LCB countries. This demands that the “*Donkey work*” should not be spared with regards to improving access to education, health facilities, portable water supply, affordable means of transportation, information and communication, subsidized agriculture and food production, etc. Added to these is the need to kill corruption and institute a platform for accountability, as well as encourage good environmental practices, without which no meaningful development would evolve. There is also a reckoning that the absence of these factors in the LCB and elsewhere holds the promise of crisis and instability, which in turn join hands with the problems of nature to further diminish the boundaries of development in the sub-region.

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