The State, Academia and Poverty: Towards a Schema for Effective Poverty Reduction in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of poverty has always occupied the central discourse of many organised polities especially given its attendant consequences in a society where it is dominant. Scholars and practitioners have in various ways debated profusely on what causes poverty and its reduction process. While some hold the profound view that the causes of poverty are largely exogenous, others submit that the causes of poverty are endogenous. They largely ascribe poverty to government corruption with limited attempt at isolating the elements of this corruption. The aim of this paper therefore, is to interrogate the contribution of the relationship between the state and academics to the accentuation of poverty and how such relationship can provide a vent for effective poverty reduction in Nigeria. It is a modest attempt at identifying a new approach towards understanding the poverty scourge and viable reduction schema. Data for the study was collected through primary and secondary sources with greater reliance on participant observation and interview methods. Data analysis was by qualitative method using simple qualitative analysis. The study submits that overlapping relationship of mutual interdependence between the state, academia and industries in stimulating research into science and technology development is a more sustainable poverty reduction strategy.
KEYWORDS: State, Academic, Industry, Poverty Reduction

INTRODUCTION

Poverty reduction is a common phenomenon in the political economy of most Third World countries. This is so because of the severe proliferation and deep negative consequences of its neglect. The process of eradicating poverty poses a serious nearly insurmountable challenge to governments where this scourge is dominant. This perhaps goes to corroborate the assertion by scholars (Obadan, 1997; Ijim Agbor, 2006) that poverty eradication is impossible in a capitalist socio-formation. Though considered nearly insurmountable, efforts at reducing poverty have become very intense in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general and such eradication strategies even though not very effective, have become one of the ideal goals of developmental policies in Africa. Poverty today is widely addressed as a global phenomenon, but its presence and effect is predominant in the Third World countries especially sub Saharan Africa. Over 200 million people in sub Saharan Africa live in extreme poverty. Of the 40 poorest countries of the world, about 33 are from sub Saharan African countries (Omolayo, 2015). The

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unemployment situation is also worrisome in Africa. The United Nations argue that over 10 to 12 million young people in Africa enter the labour market annually with only about three million jobs created annually. (Omolayo, 2016).

Over 70 percent of the Nigerian population lives below the United Nations' threshold of $1.90 a day (about 475 naira).The implication has been widespread criminal manifestations such as thievery, armed robbery, uncontrolled sex hawking, alcoholism as a smokescreen to suppress the reality of poverty in one's life, geometrical increase in rate of school dropout, as well as other delinquencies most of which bring about disruptive social tendencies in our societies including the wanton practice of the sale of human parts to overcome poverty. The frustrated youths have become a source of recruitment for electoral thug by political charlatans who employ their cheap violent services to attain electoral victory. In Nigeria, the incidence of poverty has accentuated emotional instability, frustration, progressive apathy and loss of self-respect. Many marriages get broken on daily basis because of the inability of the husbands to take care of the economic needs of the home. Fagan (1999) argues that "poverty and income disparity is linked undeniably to the presence or absence of marriage".

With the attendant problems associated with poverty, one begins to appreciate the consistent effort of government at instituting several poverty eradication programmes. Poverty is a phenomenon that no rational state leadership would ignore its existence. The nature and structure of poverty in any country is dependent on the commitment of the state and other institutional spheres such as academia, and the industry. However, one common problem which scholars and government have failed to address sufficiently is the contribution of the relationship between the state and academics to the rising poverty situation in Nigeria. How have academic researches provided a vent for industrial development that creates labour outlets for meaningful engagement of citizens? How has the state collaborated with the academia to carry out such researches and what fund has it allocated to education for such industrial base researches? Could independent relationship between institutional spheres of state, academia and industry contribute to the rising poverty profile in Nigeria? How does an overlapping relationship of these institutional spheres contribute to poverty reduction? It is the argument of this paper that state's limited involvement in academic research as well as poor academic practices contributes sufficiently to the rising poverty profile in Nigeria. In other words, an effort at poverty reduction that does not address the utility of this relationship is an exercise in futility.

Objective of Study

The broad objective of the paper is to contribute to the debate on poverty reduction in Nigeria and Africa in general.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

i.   Interrogate the contribution of the relationship between the state and the academia to the rising poverty profile in Nigeria.

ii. Explain how such relationship in a cooperative form can become a viable poverty reduction schema for Nigeria.

Methodology

The study is largely qualitative. Therefore the secondary sources of data collection were heavily relied upon. Data were collected through document studies as well as relevant literature on poverty study. The participant observation method as a variant of primary source of data collection was also utilized. Data collected were qualitatively analyzed.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

In etymological sense, the concept of poverty found its origin from the French word 'pauvre' meaning poor (Khana, 2012) and the Latin concept of pauper meaning one who is extremely poor or one living on or eligible for public charity. Over the years, scholars have undertaken a thorough definitional surgery of the concept to give it eclectic meaning and connotations. Given its contentious nature, (IjimAgbor, 2006; 60), it has attracted varied conceptualization and operationalization and therefore defies a universally accepted definition. Although poverty is one of the most familiar and enduring conditions known to humanity, it is an extremely complicated concept to understand (Camey, 1992) and has as well evolved differently in conceptualization overtime (Mistepellin & Heffernan, 2010). Owing to its situational identity, poverty can only be meaningfully explained within the context of one's historical experience and moment of a particular society.

Streeter, in his "understanding the multidimensional nature of poverty" (2004) equates poverty with inability to meet basic needs – physical (food, health care, education, shelter) and nonphysical (participation, identity required for meaningful existence). This implies the conception of poverty from the absence of the fundamental elements that makes life worth living. This point is close to Townsend (2006) evolution deprivation. He argues that families were considered to be in poverty if its income were insufficient to address its basic necessities of physical efficiency. Chambers (2006) also navigates around materialism in his explanation of the concept of poverty. For him, what poverty is taken to mean depends on who asks the question, how it is understood and who responds. His contribution to the understanding of the concept of poverty is expressed in some clusters. This manifestations include income-poverty experienced in the limitation to consumption ability, material lack or want which includes lack of or little wealth and lack of or low quality of other assets such as shelter, clothing, furniture, personal means of transport and poor access to services. The third cluster he expresses as capability deprivation suggesting what we can or cannot do, can or cannot be. This particular cluster explains poverty beyond material lack. It involves the absence of basic skills and physical abilities and self-respect in society.

From many indications, poverty prevails when a people are denied income adequate enough to take care of their material needs and when these situation alienate them from activities that are considered important and necessary in daily existence in society. This deprivation largely leads to poverty of the spirit: a concept I refer to as loss of hope and confidence in oneself which makes it absolutely difficult for the poor to compete favourably in the society. The poor therefore has no choice as he/she merely struggles to survive. It is in this

light that the United Nations view poverty as basically a denial of choices and opportunities and the absence of the capability to participate effectively in society.

The World Bank expresses dire concern on the poverty profile in the Third world countries. From the perspective of the Third world, the Bank (2002) conceives of poverty as deprivation in well-being, and also includes low incomes and inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. The concept of deprivation suggests that poverty is not a natural occurrence. It shows a pattern of societal relationship that permits a privileged few to determine economic direction of society. It is this selfish determination that alienates the majority from having a fair share of societal resources to live a meaningful life.

Two variants of poverty have often come to fore when attempting a vivid conceptualization. The concept is either defined in absolute or relative terms. By absolute poverty we mean the inability to possess an income adequate enough to take care of one's basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. What is important to understand here which is often taken for granted in studying the meaning of poverty is that absolute poverty measures poverty in terms of how ones income or money addresses a person's basic needs. That variant of the concept of poverty is not concerned with broader quality of life issues or with the overall level of irregularity in society (UNESCO, 2013). Measuring poverty within the context of basic needs alone is limiting. There are other social and cultural issues that are important to the individual the absence of which causes severe poverty.

Relative poverty on the other hand defines poverty in relation to the economic status of other members of society: people are poor if they fall below prevailing standards of living in a given societal context (UNESCO, 2013). This conception is also limited in the sense that like the notion of the absolute poverty, it is also concerned with income and consumption.

Poverty is therefore not limited to lack of resources as these variants attempt to define. Social exclusion may not necessarily arise from lack of material well-being. One could be rich but intellectually poor and attitudinally poor which could also lead to social exclusion. Khanna (2010) rejects this view of poverty as this amount to a restricted use of the term. Drawing from Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, Khanna aligns with the view that poverty involves the deprivation of basic capabilities/opportunities/choice, rather than merely as lowness of income. The recognition of the prevalence of poverty as well as the danger associated with its neglect, prompts countries where it is dominant, to often institute programmes of poverty alleviation, what Greenberg cited in Mafeje (2000) and Davies (1989) in separate exegesis refer to any process which seeks to reduce the level of poverty in a community or amongst a group of people or countries. In designing poverty alleviation strategies it is absolutely important to know what type of poverty prevails in that society and what could be responsible for its presence. This is important in order to design need-driven poverty alleviation programme.

The causes of poverty as well as how it can be alleviated effectively have been argued through various theoretical postulations. These theories, amongst others include the necessity theory, the individual attributes theory, the natural circumstantial theory and the power theory (Akeredolu-Ale, 1975). The necessity theory is understood from three variants namely the functionalist, evolutionist and capitalist entrepreneurial perspective. The functionalist variant explains the emergence of poverty from role stratification and associated reward. It argues that

since roles are evaluated differently, certain roles are rewarded better than the others. Those whose roles are rewarded meagerly form the poor population. This theory suggests that the emergence of the poor is rather spontaneous. Akeredolu-Ale (1975) disagrees with this spontaneity. He argues that what seems undisputable is the fact that the emergence of inequalities and the poor class is not as spontaneous as claimed by the functionalist theory of stratification. While this theory makes useful identification of the causes of poverty, it fails to explain clearly who does the valuation of roles. Is it the society generally or a powerful few?

The individual attributes theory holds the view that the individual position in the hierarchy of reward is determined by himself. In other words, one's aptitude, motivations and ability determine where he would be located in the income structure of society. This does not hold in all cases. Akeredolu-Ale's (1975) position on this submission makes sense. He argues that while it is possible that an individual attributes can be instrumental to his location in the society's status hierarchy, it is also clear that these attributes operate only within a structure of possibilities and limits set and defined by forces outside the scope of the individual. These forces are usually determined by the prevailing system of poverty, class relations and power. Some of the exponents of this theory include McClelland and Hagan.

The natural-circumstantial theory explains the causes of poverty from the environmental and geographical constraints. It argues that the natural endowment of the individual's environment, unemployment and old age have the capability of making the individual poor. It argues further that poverty reduction can be attained without substantial changes in the larger economic, social and political environment. One major advantage of this theory is that it has a major bearing on policy. The proponents include Hill and Murdock.

The power theory of poverty asserts that what determines the extent and distribution of poverty is the structure of political power. In this context, the powerful few who are largely instrumental to public policies organize and influences the economic system in a manner that places them in advantage position to amass wealth. The power theory explains what has been happening in the developing countries, where conditions such as low political consciousness on the part of the masses, and a high degree of centralization of natural resources, which the ruling class could exploit co-exist. As argued by Akeredolu-Ale (1975), the extent of the success of the exploiting class will depend on the revolutionary consciousness of the subject or oppressed class; on their organizational capacity to resist exploitation and overthrow the oppressive property system. A major implication of this theory for policy from the view of Uniamikogbo (1997) is that the attainment of poverty-free society requires the radical altering of the structure of power in the society. This has made the theory appear gloomy because of the envisaged implementation difficulty. Even if it is assured that the revolutionary solution would emerge in the long run, the question as to what can be done now is not answered. Some of the advocates of the theory include Heywood and Johnson.

Another variant of the poverty theory is what Tella calls the corruption theory of poverty. The theory argues that corruption fertilizes poverty in an uncontrollable manner. The theory recognizes the practice that the powerful few who have access to government positions loot public resources with ignominy. The resultant effect of this practice is that in the long run the masses are deprived of the resources that would have been used to enhance their lifestyle.

In this case, public funds and resources are fraudulently trapped in the hands of few criminals while the majorities are subjected to severe hardship (Ijim-Agbor, 2006).

It is obvious from the above that no single explanatory model can adequately explain the concept of poverty, its causes and alleviation. It is on this understanding that this study adopts the Natural-Circumstantial theory, the corruption theory of poverty and the power theory as theoretical directions for this study. The choice of these theories is borne by the fact that the natural circumstantial theory has more immediate bearing on policy. As it relates to our direction of research, the theory identifies the absence of certain natural resources as precursor to poverty and the harnessing of the available ones in the proper direction as a necessary condition for poverty reduction and by extension national development.

The corruption theory is appropriate because of its context specificity. It explains causes of poverty adequately from the context of the third world countries especially Nigeria and predicts that a reduction in corruption leads to reduction in poverty since public funds and resources will be directed at addressing the needs of the people. It explains clearly that corruption has the capability of making poverty alleviation programmes to fail and by extension retards national development.

The power theory assists explanation in our study from the perspective of the activities of few powerful individuals resulting to national poverty and retarding national development. The theory also explains the Nigerian situation where the powerful few in government and those outside government control poverty alleviation programmes and use them as a reward system for their cronies, political supporters and family members. It predicts that where poverty alleviation programmes are masterminded by this powerful few, poverty reduction will be a mirage and national development would hardly come from the angle of these programmes.

THE STATE AND THE ACADEMIA IN THE POVERTY ANALYSIS IN NIGERIA

Theorists of poverty have argued elaborately on what could likely cause and maintain steady rise in poverty rates especially in backward societies such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. While these arguments are general and may or may not apply in certain political ecologies, I argue clearly here that within the Nigerian experience, the trivialization of the network between the state and the Academia as expressed in unwholesome functional negligence is a major contributory factor to the expansion and dominance of poverty in Nigeria. The state allocates less than 20 percent of its annual budgets to education and actually spends less than that on addressing education needs in Nigeria. Given the rot in public education infinitesimal budgetary spending creates little or no impact on the outcome of education in Nigeria.

In clear terms, there is general poor funding of public education in Nigeria. Poor funding of public schools can be seen in the quantity and quality of school infrastructure which is limited and atavistic. The dominant argument in the Nigerian educational landscape is that students especially those in higher education are taught and socialized in a condition of academic fantasy principally occasioned by moribund and in most cases limited school infrastructure. Conditions of poorly equipped laboratories and uninhabitable and inadequate

classrooms where most students are subjected to taking classes in open pavilions with wanton distractions are common. Such hostile and depressing learning and teaching environment does not possess the capacity to produce human elements adequately creative to become economically self-reliant. Most of the graduates could certainly be substandard leading to complete reliance on government to provide public jobs of which majority will not defend their scholarship. The nature of public schools therefore continually prepare people to remain in poverty akin to what Oscar Lewis (1959) refers to as the culture of poverty.

The state also does not show substantial interest in commissioning and funding researches into areas that will address the poverty situation in Nigeria especially science and technology. The Nigerian state is not an industrial-based economy. In other words, it is not a production economy but highly a rentier state.   No meaningful poverty reduction can take place in a rentier economy. Industrial based economy sufficiently driven by the private sector can stimulate employment and by extension reduce economic poverty. But the question is how does an emerging private sector take the lead without an effective collaboration between the state, the academia and the industry (private sector) more so when the government does not understand the direction of its economic development? (Much more an attitude of unwillingness to chart an effective development path). Is it by technology transfer which is a myth or import substitution industrialization (Latin American structuralism) which leads to industrial cud-de-sac? The state needs to understand its industrial direction by stimulating research in fundamental industrial manufacturing/ production areas to identify some degrees of strength and feasibility for strengthening development policy.

The argument here is that where there are no meaningful researches to bring about innovation that can stimulate the economy to create labour outlets, poverty in such society cannot be reduced. The Nigerian state with its capitalist orientation cannot as a single institution reduce poverty by creating public service jobs since the state claims to be poor always – an identity common to most capitalist state. The state needs to invest in industrial and technology based researches. This is the starting point for effective poverty reduction in Nigeria.

The state's effort at liberalizing education is in tandem with best practices the world over. The question is what is the degree of access to these privately-owned schools? What percentage of higher education seekers does it absorb and from what category of the society? These are fundamental questions that lay at the contribution of private schools to the poverty debate in Nigeria. The state gives approval to private schools without any form of regulation in terms of fees. Private school fees and charges are astronomically high and discriminatory. The implication is that such schools are limited to children of the rich and those of the political office holders in Nigeria. In other words, access is restricted. A school system of that nature prepares just a few persons for the common market while majority without access to education are inadequately groomed to challenge poverty. Beyond the problem of access is the material condition of some of these private schools. While a few may pose to be adequate in infrastructure, many are substandard. Most of the private schools lack the basic infrastructure to stimulate the revolution needed in education to create a knowledge-base economy. The state fails to understand that effective poverty reduction lies in the level, nature and standard

of education of the citizens. This elusion perhaps underscores why government treats education with levity and nonchalance in Nigeria.

THE STATE AND FUNDING OF EDUCATION

The table below captures the national budgetary allocation to education for seven years beginning from 2010 to 2016. The value is also converted to dollar equivalent at the rate of 150 naira to one dollar for 2010 to 2013, 200 naira to one dollar for 2014 to 2015 and 250 naira to one dollar for 2016.

TABLE 1: BUDGETARY ALLOCATION TO EDUCATION 2010 - 2016

S/N	YEAR	AMOUNT (N) BILLION	DOLLAR EQUIVALENT ($) BILLION
1	2010	234.8	1.56
2	2011	306.3	2.04
3	2012	400.2	2.66
4	2013	426.5	2.84
5	2014	493.0	2.46
6	2015	492.0	2.46
7	2016	369.6	1.48
	TOTAL	2,722.41 TRILLION	15.5 BILLION

Source: Field survey, 2016

The table above shows that between 2010 and 2016 the Federal government of Nigeria allocated about 2.722 trillion naira to education. This allocation is approximately 15.5 billion US dollars. The budget estimate also shows that after 2014, the budgetary allocation to education began to decline.

Eventhough there could be other injections from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) and Educational Trust Fund (ETF) of about 100 billion, the total revenue for education is still meager when seen from the angle of a backward country yearning for rapid development. At this crucial period in the history of Nigeria (a period where knowledge base economy is needed to arrest a geometrically failing state) education budget is rather decreasing. The allocation takes care of 187 federal government's institutions distributed as follows: 40 federal universities, 21 federal polytechnics, 22 federal Colleges of Education and 104 unity schools. 70 percent of what goes to the universities is used for overhead cost with little or nothing left for ground breaking and cutting edge researches

SOURCES AND FUNDING FORMULA OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

This section presents the sources and funding formula for higher education in Nigeria. The major stakeholders in the funding of education in Nigeria are the federal, state and the local governments. Higher education funding involves only the federal and the state governments. The local government is largely involved in funding primary education. The instruments of this funding include Education Trust Fund (ETF), Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), Donor agencies and special interventions. The federal government through the national universities commission finances the federal universities (about 40 in all). The expenditure formula for universities is presented on the pie chart below.
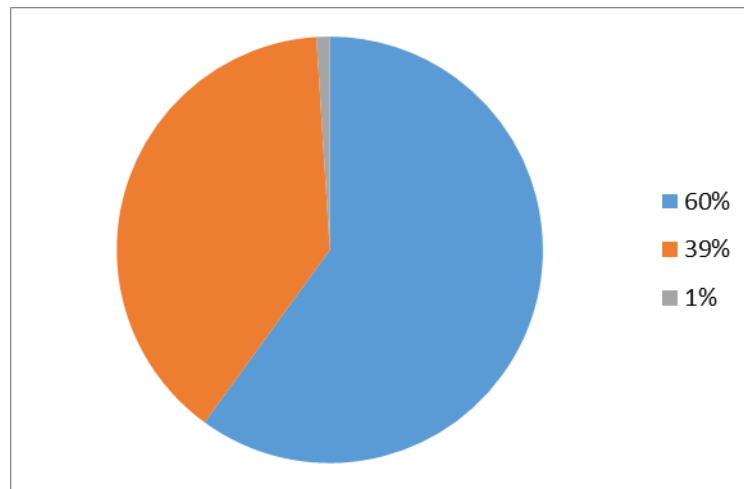
Figure 1: Pie chart showing the expenditure formula for universities in Nigeria

The pie chart distribution shows that 60 percent of what is allocated to the universities is meant to take care of academic salaries and emoluments, academic infrastructural provision as well as financing conferences and researches .This is grossly inadequate as no universities under this expenditure formula can fund any meaningful and innovative research of serious technological breakthrough. As part of the funding structure, 2 percent of the profit of limited liability companies under the Education Tax Law of 1993 (Decree No 7) is allocated to funding education with higher education taking 50 percent of the fund. Secondary education takes 40 percent while 10 percent is allocated to primary education. The share of higher education is split among the universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (Ajayi, & Alani, 1996, Oseni, 2012).

The state's ineffective involvement in education especially supporting researches has a weakening effect on the output of academics in Nigeria. The absence of research funds has the capacity to limit the strength and depth of researches carried out by academics. Because of the high poverty rate among academics, emphasis on publication is to address their promotion needs since the more you publish the possibility of getting promoted to the next higher rank. I argue clearly that emphasis on promotion and absence of research support limits the quality of researches. There is no adequate commitment to deep and sustained research activities in terms of time and direction. The concern is in the quantity of publications that adds up for the next promotion and not researches whose outcome can spark up innovations that are likely to create a vent for job opportunities and by extension contribute to poverty reduction. Specific areas of invention that can generate employment and revenue are no longer attractive to academics because of lack of funding. Inventions are products of researches facilitated by adequate funding. This is limited in Nigeria and contributes to the explanation of the growing rate of unemployment and poverty.

Access to Conference grants is either limited or nonexistence. Where it exist, most academics access it as a means of poverty alleviation and not as an assistance to showcase ones research outcome in a Conference of time-tested academics. In other words, academics hurriedly put up Conference papers not just to make any difference but to have access to the Conference grant where it exist as well as to satisfy an aspect of promotion requirement. A

large chunk of the students projects (Thesis and Dissertations) approved and supervised by academics possess little or no verve to spring up any new development challenges as they hardly address anything innovative. This shortcoming is partly related to the common and recurrent tradition of inability of graduate students to access research grants. These practices do not contribute to knowledge-base economy needed for the overall development of society. It is in this direction that the poor networking between the state and the academia contributes to poverty rate in Nigeria.

THE STATE AND THE ACADEMIA IN POVERTY REDUCTION: THE NECESSITY OF OVERLAPPING RELATIONSHIP

I argue in this section that a more realistic poverty reduction strategy lies in the overlapping relationship between the state and the academia as well as the industry. I explain this with the aid of a neo-corporatist helix model to show the connectivity between the state, academia and industry in poverty reduction.

The "triple helix" is a spiral model of innovation that captures multiple reciprocal relationships at different points in the process of knowledge capitalization (Etzkowitz, 2002). The triple helix has three dimensions. The first is internal transformation in each of the helices, which may involve the development of lateral ties among companies through strategic alliances or an assumption of an economic development mission by universities. The second is the influence of one helix upon another and the third is the creation of a new overlay of trilateral networks and organizations from the interaction among the three helices.

Etzcowitz argues that the model indicates a relatively equal and interdependent relationship between the institutional spheres of university, industry and government   which overlap and reinforces the role of the other. His argument is that effective knowledge capitalization presents the need to shift from the ideology of separate institutional spheres (typical of the US) as well a shift from the idea of the state subsuming academia and industry (as seen in the case of the former Soviet Union) to more of an overlapping relationship of mutual benefit. In other words, older economic development strategies which were either industrial sector base (e.g, the US) or governmental sector base (e.g, Latin America) for efficient development are being supplanted or strengthened by knowledge-based economic development strategies, drawing upon resources from the three spheres.

This model is a new institutional configuration to promote innovation in which the "triple helix" of university, industry and government is emerging as a new form of collaboration in economic development of societies. Etzkowitz, Gulbrandsen and Levitt, (2000) argue that the dynamic of society has changed from one of strong boundaries between separate institutional spheres and organizations to a more flexible overlapping system, with each taking the role of the other. The university is a firm founder through incubator facilities; industry is an educator through company universities and government is a venture capitalist through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and other programmes. Wessner (1999) submits

also that Government has also to encourage collaborative Research and Development among firms, universities and national laboratories to address issues of national competitiveness.

The kind of relationship projected for the pathway to poverty reduction is not the one in which institutional spheres are separate from each other without collaboration or one in which one sphere subsumes the other in an inclusive order but a model of overlapping spheres in which the different institutions collaborate and cooperate with each other to produce a knowledge base economy. This analysis is depicted in the figure below.
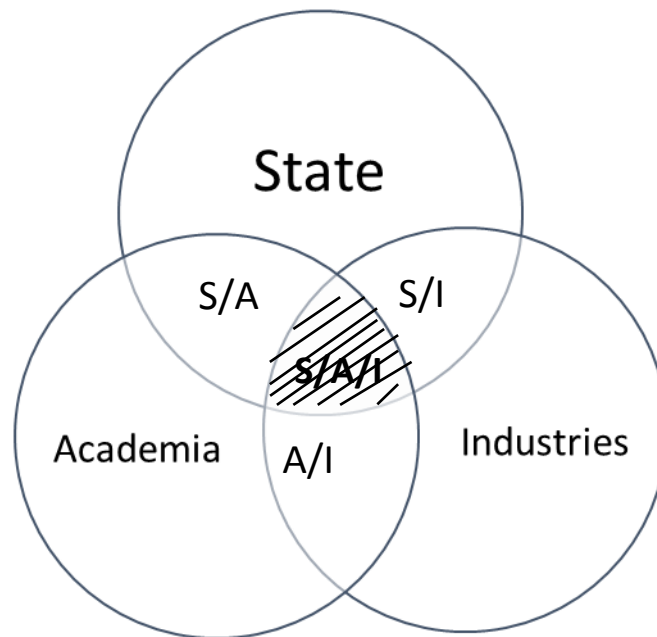

FIGURE 2: OVERLAPPING SCHEMA
SOURCE: Author's configuration

S/A: This is where the state and the academia interface. The principal demand of this network is that the academia (universities or research institutes) can stimulate researches of innovative outcome (bottom-up) which can be funded and supported by the state. On the other hand, the state can nurture or initiate a particular innovative interest and cause the academia to undertake the research which would be funded by the state (top-down).

A/I is the point where the academia and the industries converge. The pattern of interaction here is that the industries could initiate a research idea and commit the universities to undertake the research, the outcome of which the industries will apply. Buoyant industries at this point can also fund such researches.

S/I is where the state and the industries converge in this relationship. The state and industries can collaborate or jointly initiate researches and fund same.

S/A/I. This point of convergence is the schema for poverty reduction. The tripartite relationship sees the state getting involved or interested in what happens in other institutional spheres. The academia is alive to its research responsibility with committed support from the state. The urge to become more creative and innovative becomes high because the resources to carry out

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ground-breaking researches are readily provided by the state and in some cases by the industries. The industries on the other hand are committed to apply research outcomes.

A relationship of this kind produces a knowledge-base economy where the state has within its kitty a possible idea of its overall economic development. Where innovative researches are initiated and funded and the outcome applied, it speeds up the overall development of society and creates opportunities for people to address their personal economic needs. A substantial exercise at this direction removes so many people from dependence and prepares them towards self-reliance. Poverty reduction strategies should not be the provision of temporary handouts to the perceived poor but by developing a knowledge-base economy that provides a system of individual economic self-reliance.

From the neo-corporatist perspective, a consensus on activities among the universities (academia), industry and government is able to increase the technological output of the society. This perspective emphasizes active government involvement and commitment in this relationship. There is, in this model a conscious government effort at ensuring a steady relationship that encourages the effort of the academia and the industries at effective technological development. What is very typical here is that the government sets the stage for such relationship by funding research establishments and stabilizing the economy. Under such practice, education budgets and special allocation to research and development are taken seriously by the state. Beyond this, the state largely establishes research institutes and encourages researchers to see themselves as necessary partners in the science and technology development effort of the state. There is in this case, complete institutional support system (IjimAgbor and Williams, 2008).

According to Leyderdorf and Etzkowitz, (1997), the evolutionist assume that in some specific local context, there is the convergence between the government, universities and industry where they learn to encourage economic growth or through what is often referred to as generative relationships. This type of relationship is explained by Viale, Ghiglone and Rosseli to mean a loosely coupled reciprocal relations and joint undertakings that persist over time and induce changes in the way agents come to conceive their environment and how to act in it. In concrete terms, government role is largely to define the appropriate framework that is congenial for individuals, academia and the industry to work towards a higher level of integration.

Rosselli (1995) has observed that universities play important roles as promoters of socio-economic development. This is so especially in peripheral regions where technological development is still very backward. In the backward societies or what is often referred to as the developing countries, the relationship between the state, universities and the industry is important and necessary. Such a relationship has the potential for knowledge based development for science and technology rejuvenation (IjimAgbor and Williams, 2008).

It has been established that the convergence or integration of the government, universities and industries in science and technology development has presented fabulous relevance. Viale and Ghiglione (2007) wrote that in Catalonia, Spain, science and technology policy over the last decade has been considerably more innovative than at any previous time. This period has been marked by a significant increase in public and private science and

technology funding, which translated into a considerable increase in science and technology spending, human resources and infrastructure.

Bellavista in Viale and Ghiglione (2007) has presented the Barcelona science park as an example of a successful attempt at university – industry collaboration. China as an upcoming technological world has exhibited the usefulness of the connection between the government, university and the industry in its science and technology advancement. The importance the state attaches to supporting science and technology is expressed in the words of Derg Xiaoping – a one-time vice premier thus: The crux of the four modernizations is the mastering of modern science and technology. Without the high-speed development of science and technology, it is impossible to develop the national economy at a high speed.

CONCLUSION

Poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria are mere handouts and cosmetic strategies employed by political office holders as governance deceit. The programmes do not possess the capacity to reduce an iota of poverty. I have argued here that the rot in public education also contributes to the rising poverty situation in Nigeria and that an overlapping interdependent relationship between the state, academia and industries in initiating and funding researches in fundamental areas of national development such as science and technology and the application of the outcome of such researches is the starting point for sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria. Several factors could account for why a strong top-down relationship between the government, universities and industry is important. Tisdell (1981) has noted that why it is necessary for governments in modern economies to give greater consideration to goals or priorities and efficiency in their science and technology policies is because they are responsible for a high proportion of the funding of science and technology expenditure in capitalist and quasi-capitalist countries. Governments in these countries are active performers in the educational and research development fields. By their policies of various kinds, whether well designed or randomly formulated, governments also influence the performance of individuals and companies in adding to science and technology and employing it irrespective of whether government partially fund this activity.

Active government involvement in funding and directing development research is either weak or completely absent in Nigeria. Given the cost involvement of science and technology development and other economic base researches, there is a greater need for government, universities and the industry to collaborate in the drive towards advancing science and technology and other industrial development research in Nigeria.

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