INTRODUCTION

Human capacity building plays a fundamental role and remains the most important factor in economic growth and development in countries of the world. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world’s time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions. They embody the deep aspirations and commitment of the global community for significant improvements in the quality of human life (UNDP, 2009). The only way to reduce poverty in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) without resort to international welfarism or international migration is through the development of productive capacities of the LDCs and concomitant expansion of productive employment opportunities within them (United Nation Conference on Trade and Development-UNCTAD, 2006). In the last two decades, the percentage of the world’s population living on less than $1 a day has been halved, falling from 40 to 20 percentage points (World Bank Official website). During this period, countries increased their trade share and slashed tariffs. Yet one billion people still live in extreme poverty, and half of the world’s populations live on less than $2 a day (World Bank, 2005). The description of Nigeria as a paradox by the World Bank (1996) has continued to be confirmed by events and official statistics in the country. The paradox is that the poverty level in Nigeria contradicts the country’s immense natural and human wealth. Among other things, the country is enormously endowed with human, agricultural, petroleum, gas, and large untapped solid mineral resources. Particularly worrisome is that the country earned over US$300 billion from one resource – petroleum – during the last three decades of the twentieth century. But rather than record remarkable progress in national socio-economic development, Nigeria retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries at the threshold of twenty-first century whereas she was among the richest 50 in the early-1970s. Official statistics show that in 1980 the national (average) poverty incidence was 28.1 percent of the population. The distribution of the incidence across the states of the federation showed a maximum of 49.5 percent recorded for Plateau (and Nassarawa which was excised from Plateau). This meant that every state had a poverty incidence below 50 per cent. By 1985, the national (average) poverty incidence had risen to 46.3 per cent, with the maximum of 68.9 per cent recorded in Bauchi (and Gombe which was carved out of Bauchi). As at 1996, the national average stood at 65.6 percent with Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara (all old Sokoto State) recording the highest incidence of 83.6 per cent; followed by Bauchi and Gombe with 83.5 percent. As at 2000, the incidence of poverty was believed to have risen to 70 percent at the national level. The increasing incidence of poverty, both within and among locations, was in spite of various resources and efforts exerted on poverty-related programmes and schemes in the country, thus suggesting that the programmes and schemes were ineffective and ineffectual. Hence, it is necessary to say that the poverty problem in the country is partly a feature of high inequality which manifests in highly unequal income distribution and differential access to basic infrastructure, education, training and job opportunities, which are consequences of human capacity building disparity among Nigerians.

With this in mind, this paper tends to examine how human capacity building can reduce or perhaps eradicate poverty in Nigeria. This broad objective will be specifically achieved by: looking at the concepts of human capacity building and poverty in Nigeria, and assessing vital issues in human capacity building that can...
underpin poverty eradication in Nigeria. This forms the basis for policy recommendations in the paper. Useful conclusion is drawn afterwards.

**MOTIVATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is spurred by the high level of poverty and the need for human capacity building to serve as a yardstick to reduce or eradicate poverty in Nigeria. A reasonable number of Nigerians are naturally talented, but lack the full support or necessary information that will help them uncover and utilize their potentials in order to be what they want to be in life. The Nigerian government that has been, and it’s still being criticized for being highly shrouded with corruption in its arms and tiers, rarely pay serious attention to human capacity building in Nigeria. As a result of this, poor attention is given to education, training, development, infrastructure, finance/sponsorship and workers’ incentives, which consequently have made many Nigerian youths to be confused and frustrated, and subsequently urged them to engage in all forms of social vices or criminalities like internet fraud (popularly known as yahoo-yahoo in Nigeria), prostitution, arm robbery and violence across the country. Therefore, since the Nigerian government is not performing adequately in meeting the needs and aspirations of Nigerians, it is essential to enlighten or educate Nigerians, particularly the youths on the need to unravel their hidden potentials or talents through human capacity building that will help them extinct poverty and wretchedness in Nigeria. In achieving this laudable goal, the Nigerian government, owners of organizations, philanthropists, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders in Nigeria have a role to play. All these aforementioned issues serve as imperative for this study.

**IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY**

The study will go a long way to enlighten the Nigerian government, owners of organizations, other stakeholders and those vulnerable to poverty in Nigeria, particularly the youths on the need to adequately and judiciously encourage and imbibe human capacity building, which will serve as a yardstick to poverty reduction or eradication in Nigeria.

**CONCEPTUAL ISSUES: HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA**

**The Concept of Human Capacity Building**

Human capacity building is a development paradigm that is of more significance than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to leave lives that they value. Therefore, development is much more than economic growth which is only means of enlarging people’s choices (Mahbub ul Haq, 1998). Human capacity building is related to economics and standards of living. Human capacity refers to the stock of competences, knowledge and personality attributes embodied in the ability to perform work so as to produce economic value. It is the attributes gained by a worker through education and experience. Many early economic theories refer to it simply as workforce, one of three factors of production, and consider it to be a fungible resource – homogeneous and easily interchangeable. Other conceptions of labour dispense with these assumptions. Human capacity theory predicts that more educated individuals are more productive. According to the theory, productivity of labour is high with educated individuals and consequently they contribute far more to the level of national income and also earn higher income than their uneducated counterparts. Furthermore, education is a good measure of human development and the relationship between human development and poverty level has a significant effect on economic growth and development in some selected countries of the world. Human development index is the catalogue used in measuring human capacity building in most countries of the world. Human capacity building (HD) and Human Development Index (HDI) are powerful concepts. The former refers to the process of empowerment in the possession of the capacity to build up oneself so as to be able to live a long life, be able to read and write and so participate in the societal affairs effectively and above all be gainfully employed to earn a living. The latter merely establishes how far a country has been able to achieve this for its citizens in numerical qualitative evidence represented by a real number. The fact is that earlier indices of development such as per capita income and its various derivatives have not been able to establish this effectively, especially for comparative purposes. HDI is an index fashioned out of education, life expectancy and income in purchasing power parity.

**The Concept of Poverty**

Poverty is multi-dimensional in nature. Therefore, it defies a unique definition. There is always difficulty in deciding where to draw the line between the poor and the rich. Aluko (1975) refers to poverty as a lack of command over basic consumption needs, which means that there is inadequate level of consumption giving rise to insufficient foods, clothing and/or shelter, and moreover the lack of certain capacities such as being able to participate with dignity in society. Poverty is also defined as the inability to attain a minimum standard of living (World Bank Report, 1990). It is viewed in terms of insufficient income for securing the basic necessities of life such as food, potable water, clothing and shelter. Poverty is more easily recognized than defined. Hence, a universally acceptable definition of the term has remained elusive but from a social perspective, poverty means the denial of choice and opportunities for a tolerable life (UNDP, 1997). Poverty is a global phenomenon which affects continents, nations and people differently. It affects people in various depths and levels at different times and stages of existence; the main difference is the intensity and prevalence of this malaise. Poverty relates to a state whereby individual lacks the ability to cater adequately for his or her basic needs of food, clothing and shelter, unable to meet social and economic obligations, lack gainful employment, skills assets and self-esteem and also has limited access to social and economic infrastructures such as health, education, potable water,
Dynamics of Poverty
Poverty has many dimensions – shortened lives, illiteracy, social exclusion and lack of materials to improve family circumstances. Further, these dimensions can overlap in different combinations where for example men view poverty different from women. Human and income poverty seem to go hand in hand. For example, some people can maintain reasonable income until their lack of effective access to health services and other basic needs of life, due to economic circumstances. In Nigeria, poverty sometimes, presents itself in a periodical manner. Poverty may be seasonal in rural areas; lean periods and low income availability coincide with period of endemic disease. Seasonal rains destroy rural roads and physically isolate the rural poor from markets and essential services. Among the urban poor, times of economic hardship fall at the middle of the month when salaried employees run out of funds. Poverty can sometimes be structural. It systematically excludes a portion of the population from full national and social participation through hunger, inadequate income, powerlessness, poor education and disease. For example, if a parent is poor, the chances of the children becoming non-poor are limited. The parent who is poor have no landed property, lacks money to educate the children and usually has a large family that is inadequately provided for. Other poverty is more transient and reflects asset of vulnerabilities for income, assets and entitlements. In this context, poverty means the absence of security and so affect a very wide spectrum of Nigerian families. They may have adequate income for some time but may highly be vulnerable to changes, hazards and misfortune. Failure to maintain social integration and build hope for poverty reduction leads to violence against property and persons. This in turn impact negatively on the economy and welfare of both poor and non-poor.

From the above analysis, it can be inferred that the ingredients of human capacity building that can help reduce or perhaps eradicate poverty in Nigeria are: Training and Development, Education, Mentoring, Finance/Sponsorship, Infrastructure, Employment and incentives and Youth Entrepreneurship. It is on the basis of this, that we have the next discussion.

Vital Issues In Human capacity building That Can Underpin Poverty Reduction or Eradication In Nigeria: Policy Recommendations

- Training and Development
- Education
- Mentoring
- Finance/Sponsorship
- Infrastructure
- Employment and incentives
- Youth Entrepreneurship

Training and Development
Training implies preparation for an operation or for specific skills. It is narrower in conception than either education or development. It is job oriented than development. On the other hand, development implies a broader view of knowledge and skills acquisition than training. It is less job oriented and as to do with career orientation. We should recall that organization is made up of individuals from various background, placed at various cadre (that is, operational, intermediate and managerial cadres) within the organization. Hence, some school of thoughts are of the opinion that, training should be used in relation to workers at the operational level who are still developing their careers, whereas development should be associated with workers at the intermediate and managerial levels. No matter the argument, both concepts go hand in hand. There is always overlap between training and development. Nonetheless, training should be structured as follow: training in attitude, training in skills and training in knowledge, which can done through “on-the-job and off-the job” so as to capture all the fundamental elements of employees capacity for necessary development. What should be the objectives of Training and Development (T & D)?

The objectives of Training and development should include the following:

- To improve efficiency and morale of employees
- To raise the standard of unskilled personnel, thereby helping to overcome labour shortages and redundancy.
- To help the supervisors to decrease the amount of time they voted to supervision.
- To help employees to adapt to changing work environment and innovation (technology)
- To help increase productivity of employees which will translate into greater profit
- To lead to better work performance and reduces industrial accident.

Education
Education is the best gift any successful government or parent can give to her citizens or children all over the world. Education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage success in a variety of settings. Education for sustainable development is the focus or projection of education that seeks to equip people towards creating a sustainable future. Stakeholders such as government, businesses, educational institutions, media, and organizations play important roles in achieving sustainable development. Each of these sectors has a different vision of sustainable development. Some are interested in environmental preservation and protection; some have economic development interests, while others may be more interested in social development. According to UNESCO (2000), the way each nation, cultural group and individual views sustainable development will depend on its own values. The Nigerian government seems to have woken up to the reality that the country needs to break away from the vicious cycle of poverty, infrastructure neglect, corruption and other social problems. The reason had been that, after 53 years of achieving colonial independence, it cannot be argued that Nigeria has attained her optimum level of development. According to Kolawole and Omolayo (2006), this is as a result of the
fact that many Nigerians have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures due to lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their targets. To him, the university curriculum was in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white-collar jobs. This underscores why millions of Nigerian youths and a lot of university graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of white-collar jobs. It is necessary and possible to position Nigeria universities to stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates that can help alleviate poverty in the country.

Mentoring
Mentoring is the process of using especially knowledgeable, selected and trained individuals to provide care and advice that will help to develop the skills of nascent or novice. A mentor guides, advises, provides information, coaches, offers help and provides a ‘parental role to a protégé. Therefore, mentoring should be encouraged in Nigeria so that a novice or nascent can model or channel his/her skills, attitudes, knowledge, values and norms to that of their mentors. Their mentors should assist them in whatever capacity to help them grow and become masters of the game.

Finance/Sponsorship
Nigerian government, non-governmental organizations, political associations, wealthy individuals and profit-making organizations should endeavor to finance or sponsor (either in cash or in kind) individual with exceptional creative and innovative skills, which cuts across all professions and occupations in Nigeria. Actually, efforts are already geared toward this issue, however, there is need to strengthen it, while more organizations and people should patronize it so as to extinct poverty in the country.

Infrastructure
Human capacity rely heavily on good health system, safe drinking water, sound education system, good roads, electricity and other infrastructure to sustain, survive and develop. These are environmental factors that determine human capacity building effective and efficiency. Hence, Nigerian government should make these factors available and accessible to Nigerians so as to promote business activities, and thereby reduce or eliminate poverty in the country.

Employment and Incentives
Everybody cannot be employed. Therefore, those who are employed (whether full or disguised) should be well taken care of by providing adequate financial and non-financial incentives for what they do, at the appropriate time. Victimization, oppression of workers and consistent delay in their salaries and other benefits accruable to them should be avoided. When employees are treated well, they will be able to put in the best in their jobs, promote their career, develop their organizations in meeting targets and boycott industrial actions that are capable of disrupting organizations’ activities and goals.

Youth Entrepreneurship
If Nigeria wants to create a future for herself, it must invest in its youth. Timing is critical to harness the demographic dividend the “youth bulge” brings. There is, however, only a small window of opportunity. There is inadequate focus and a lack of an innovation culture within Nigerian schools and tertiary institutions on the practical skills required to start, manage or work in entrepreneurship ventures. Only few of them have entrepreneurial centers dedicated to entrepreneurial development. Compare this to Singapore, a country that provides mandatory entrepreneurship education for one year within the primary school system. If youth are provided with the right skills, they can reap the benefits of employment. The most successful nations, that is, the competitive advantage societies create wealth by exploiting complex products and services. The right investments will drive economic gains and foster industrial development created by highly skilled people.

Creating a society that encourages youth-led entrepreneurship and makes it easy to start and grow a business requires more than just money and a good idea. It requires a whole network of interlocking institutions, policies and cultural attitudes, collectively known as the “entrepreneurship ecosystem.” The question then becomes, “how do we promote youth entrepreneurship for sustainable and inclusive industrial development that will help to reduce or perhaps eradicate poverty in Nigeria?” Financing opportunities, Training, Education, the environment and mentoring are instrumental. All these aforementioned factors explain human capacity building. Thus, the Nigerian government and other stakeholders should address these issues directly and correctly.

CONCLUSION
The concept of human capacity can be interpreted in many ways. One of them could be looking at the person as an asset; as a resource that belongs to the organization and from which we can demand all its capacity and commitment. A more suitable definition from what we have learned about this term over the years is that human capacity is a treasure that a company or society has available with respect to the qualifications of the personnel that works there. Therefore, human capacity represents the value that each employee or individual brings to the table, according to his/her studies, knowledge, capabilities and skills. The main value of a company or society does not lie in its systems, controls, or machinery and equipment, but in human capacity building. As much as technology and data systems may evolve, nothing substitutes the value provided by human capacity building. The biggest companies or developed countries in the world are recognized by their talent and the attitude of their people. Many years ago, we read that human capacity is a non-depreciable asset. Today, however, we can say firmly that it does. When? When we do not value it, when we do not train it and when we do not create an environment in which they can align themselves with the mission and vision of the organization or society. What in the past was gotten through a mere salary is now much more difficult to obtain; it is necessary to recognize the person as an
individual and not as a machine. We have seen how the best human resources leave a company or country, not for a better salary or due to excess work, but rather many times they leave in search of a better work environment, training and development opportunities, and overall, looking to fulfill that need to be recognized and valued. Therefore, developing human capacity requires creating and cultivating environments in which human beings can rapidly learn and apply new ideas, competencies, skills, behaviors and attitudes. The tools for creating these opportunities include training, education, facilitation, mentoring and consulting. The focus is on meeting the needs of learners and organizations alike. Human capacity building is therefore an indispensable tool in a constantly changing world. It will suffice to say that human capacity building is a perpetual new ways of doing old things in order to foster rapid growth and development that will assist in reducing or eradicating poverty in Nigeria. Thus, Nigerian government, organizations and Individuals in Nigeria should embrace and encourage human capacity building in its dimensions and operations, because one of the strategies for eliminating poverty in the country hinges on it.

REFERENCES


